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CAMBRIDGE STAIRCASE

BEING 'VARSITY SKETCHES

BY THE AUTHOR OF

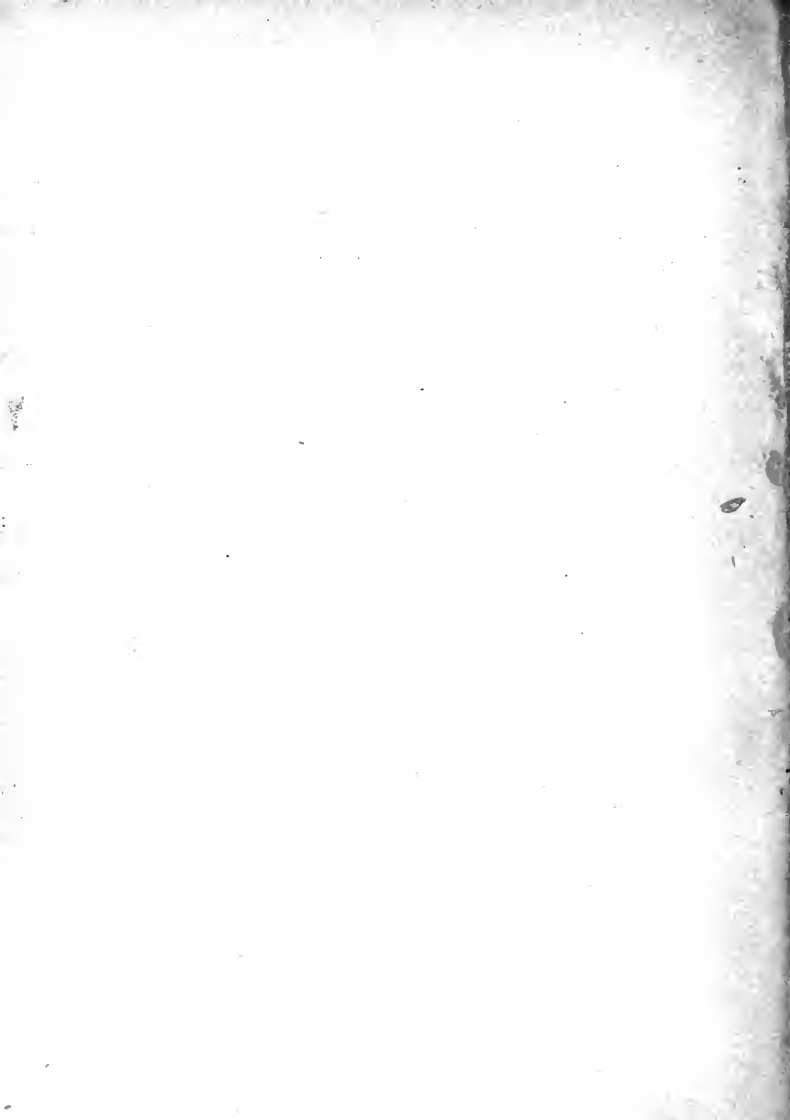
'A DAY OF MY LIFE AT ETON'





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CAMBRIDGE STAIRCASE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "A DAY OF MY LIFE AT ETON,"

"ABOUT SOME FELLOWS,"

ETC.

[George Nugent Banks]

1883/10/10

LONDON:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,

CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.

1883.

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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A DAY OF MY LIFE AT ETON.

**ABOUT SOME FELLOWS; or, Odds and
Ends from my Note Book.**

**CAMBRIDGE TRIFLES; or, Splutterings
from an Undergraduate's Pen.**

A CAMBRIDGE STAIRCASE.

**LONDON: SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, AND RIVINGTON,
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THE APOLOGY FOR THIS BOOK.

WHETHER modern books do not require it, or whether their authors lack the modesty of those of past generations, I know not, but at any rate the custom of prefixing an elaborate apology to a book seems nowadays to have fallen into comparative disuse. Modern prefaces do not, as a rule, so often expatiate on and attempt to explain away the demerits of the works they herald forth, as they appear rather to try to enforce on their readers how great would have been the loss had they not been published. But in spite of all that these prefaces have said, I have sometimes thought that something has been wanting, if it is only the secondary reasons for the publication of the work, say, occasionally in the case of poetic effusions, that the author felt bad inside. And now that I am called upon to write a few prefatory remarks to this book, I feel that some sort of apology is due to the public, at the very least, for the exceedingly unfinished state in which it has appeared, if not for other deficiencies in it.

The true state of the case is, that I never intended the book to appear at all. I have before this taken upon myself in my hours of idleness, perhaps somewhat audaciously, to attempt to illustrate the manners and customs of certain phases of life in which, during my com-

paratively short career, I have found myself. On the strength of this, I suppose, I was requested to do what I could to enlighten the youth of England, through the medium of a magazine that was being published for its benefit, as to the domestic life of the Cambridge undergraduate. I rashly consented : and it was not till I had got well into the middle of my task that I realized what it was that I had undertaken. I have always lived a very quiet life at the University, and my materials were not large ; but I had promised ; and I did my best in collating what information I could think of as likely to be useful to the would-be ordinary Cambridge man : and so week by week I laboured at these papers till the tale was complete, and then I thought I had done with them.

There are generally certain works of every author, no matter how famous he may be—ephemeral magazine articles, unfinished stories, and the like—that are carefully kept in the background until after his decease, and then launched upon the public as a sort of final notice that nothing more will ever come from his pen. And such would I have had these sketches. I was conscious that the patience of the public is an exhaustible commodity, and that, by constant issues of series of sketches, I might lay myself open to a comparison to an unsatisfactory cook, who can, perhaps, produce tolerable *entrées*, but is unable to serve up anything more substantial ;

and so when these had fulfilled their immediate purpose, I would have had them remain where they were till, perhaps at some future time, they might have again emerged to shine in the reflected glory of my *Opus Majus*. But as I mused on what the subject of my *Opus Majus* was to be, lo ! my posthumous works already printed and bound, and a copy forwarded to me to be acknowledged as my offspring, and sent forth into the world with a fitting introduction !

My offspring these sketches certainly are, though other people have adopted them and brought them into society, and I feel I cannot conscientiously decline all responsibility. I must do something for them, if it is only to lead them to the public threshold, give them my blessing, and kick them out to take their chance in the world. They have been nursed in secret until they have attained to considerable proportions, namely, to some hundred copies irrevocably printed, and they have been brought to me all unkempt and unshorn as they were torn from the pages of the magazine in which I had hoped they had been comfortably provided for for life. I would gladly have trimmed them up a little : but as it is, the public must take them, if it will, as they find them. A printer is not a kind nurse, and I know what the critics will say. The stopping is queer in many places : my readers can by a very little consideration rectify that.

The English is loose in places : I hope, however, that the sense is clear enough to convey what is intended, and that is more than can always, I think, be said of some even of the anti-posthumous works of the present day ; and there are one or two Cambridge expressions which are fallacious : these last are purely printer's errors, and the assistance of a Cambridge man, if he is anywhere about, must be called in to set them right. There are, too, passages in the book which I should have preferred to have altered altogether, for reasons which my more intimate friends will understand, and which have arisen since the sketches were originally written ;* these must be read by those friends with mercy, and they must not judge me by them.

But, finally, the best wish that I can give these sketches, and the best advice I can give the public, if it is anxious for their welfare, is that it should buy them up with avidity until the whole present supply is exhausted ; then I shall be at liberty to take them in hand, and comb and dress them into a fitter state for higher society. And then there is always the chance that some day even this edition may be valuable, like Shakespeare's earlier and more unfinished quartos, and a copy in the family may not be a bad speculation when the bibliomaniacs are on the prowl. ¿ *Quien sabe ?*

* September, 1882.

A CAMBRIDGE STAIRCASE.



I.

WE AND OURS.

IF by the words of the old song, "Be it never so homely, there's no place like home," is meant exclusively the place where one was born and brought up, or the place of residence for the time being of one's parents and other nearest relations,—one's "people," to use the common university and public school parlance,—if, I say, this is what is meant by "home," always, and without some qualification, I, with all due defer-

ence to those who may be supposed to know better than myself, beg to differ. It is all very well, while you are an infant, or advancing through the schoolroom stage, or when you have got as far as a private or even a public school, and are still of an age when you are supposed not to be able to manage altogether for yourself, and have to depend for your luxuries and other extras on tips and resources of a like precarious nature, for instance, hampers, or what can be gained by doing little odd jobs for grandmothers or other benevolent relatives, such as weeding garden-paths, &c., &c., at an exorbitant rate of so-called wages,—it is all very well then always to regard the parent nest as home ; but when all this is of the past, and the age of tips has given place to the age of an allowance, and you begin to like to have some definite place to stow your things, instead of trusting to the tender mercies of others not to find them dispersed in all quarters of the house whenever you return from a temporary absence, yourself having to take your chance of

being put into any place that happens to be unoccupied at the time, whether it be the best spare room, or only a shake-down in one of the attics—when, in short, you begin to like to be more independent, and to feel that you are getting too large to be doubled up anywhere,—then, I maintain, that though it is always pleasant to be in the bosom of one's family for a time, it is always much more really comfortable to be in a place where one has made one's own surroundings for oneself, and has not the feeling of living there on sufferance ; where you can order servants who are not paid by others, can get up when you like, feed when you like, and go to bed when you like. The theory of every Englishman's house being his castle cannot be fully carried out unless he can do pretty well as he likes there. If, therefore, by "home" is meant a place where everything is unconditionally one's own, then it *can* be used in another sense than that in which it is generally received, and I agree with the song.

I would not for the world have it supposed that

I am in any way ungrateful to my belongings for all their kindness to me: far from it. On the contrary, I still constantly revive the idea of old ties, whenever I want anything done that I can't do for myself. What I want to be understood is the intense feeling of satisfaction that I experience when I return to my rooms at Cambridge, and after having had my luggage brought up by my gyp, and told my bedmaker to order in my groceries, and stirred up my coals in my fireplace with my poker, I sit down in my armchair and look round at my "things," and think that I am again *chez moi*—that with a clear conscience I could if I liked issue cards to the effect that I am "at home,"—my own home, not anybody else's besides. Perhaps this sounds selfish, but I can't help it.

And yet this state of things is very transitory. My chances of a fellowship are extremely small—perhaps if the plague were to break out and all the fellows and all the scholars and sizars and subsizars were to die, and the authorities were reduced to con-

sider the pensioners in alphabetical order—which is how they usually do consider them—with a view to filling up the vacancies, there might be some possibility, as my initial is an early one, of my becoming part of the honourable, or reverend, or whatever-it-is Society of my college, and so might ensure a residence of protracted duration—seven years at least, under the new statutes ; and then if I should happen to be chosen to a tutorship, or to be elected master, or head porter, or some other collegiate dignitary, I might be there for life : but under the present improved systems of drainage, and other sanitary arrangements, such a contingency being very unlikely, I am only up at Cambridge for a comparatively short period of my existence, and that period being now nearly elapsed, I shall soon have to be thinking of moving on. Still, here are my worldly possessions for the present, and here am I in the midst of them ; and though I so far give way to the conventional mode of talking as to say that I am going “home” whenever I go down to visit my people, yet there is

no denying that my inmost convictions tell me that here are my headquarters, here is the basis of most of my operations ; and here in my room I can play a leading part as host, instead of only a subordinate one as a member of a large family, until circumstances shall compel me to convey myself and my *lares* and *penates* somewhere else. I daresay I shall entertain exactly the same sentiments with regard to my chambers in the Temple, or my lodgings in a fashionable, or unfashionable, as the case may be, part of the metropolis ; but that has still to come.

It may be that the college to which I have the honour to belong, or which has the honour of my belonging to it, whichever is the right way of looking at it—though perhaps, now I come to think of it, the latter sentiment is rather anticipatory, and ought to be reserved until it has been seen how I turn out—it may be, I was going to say, that my college is especially adapted to the encouragement of such notions of perfect, or at any rate nearly perfect, contentment as I have

formulated above. It is not a large college ; and I may add, it is exceedingly select : we are all honour men : the contaminating presence of a poll-man as a member is not allowed among us, though we may perhaps admit him as a visitor from another college if he is a good sort of fellow : we are all destined to make our mark in the world, at least, we all think so, and of course that goes a great way towards it : in short, we are a regular factory of bishops, statesmen, judges, and what not *in futuro*. If we were to smash up, goodness knows what would become of the rest of the universe. But putting all this aside, the advantage of our comparative smallness is, that we can know every one if we like, which can't be done in a large college ; while, on the other hand, if we don't care to, it is just as easy not to do so, by a sort of tacit agreement between the parties concerned that the acquaintanceship, after the first experimental advances, need not be carried any further. A freshman coming up is very like a new cow being turned into a field with a lot of

others : every one in the second year calls upon him, and sniffs at him, so to speak, and he is soon induced to show what sort of an individual he is, and the result is in some mysterious manner conveyed to the rest of the college : if it is satisfactory, and he is universally voted a decent sort of fellow, he is at once received and made generally comfortable ; if, however, the drawing process exhibits him in a more unfavourable light, he has to retrieve his character by a longer period of probation : still, every chance is afforded him, and it only depends on himself sooner or later to more or less be on terms with everybody. We care very little for antecedents : we take our freshmen as they take us, and treat them accordingly.

I do not know that I am, but perhaps I may be, particularly blessed with a faculty of liking most people : it certainly is a great deal more trouble to quarrel, or to be properly cold to a person, than it is to be friendly towards him ; but at any rate I have always managed to get on very well with most of my college, and, what I feel most to

be a matter of congratulation, with the whole of my own staircase. It is so exceedingly inconvenient to be on bad terms with the rest of one's staircase : it is so much nicer to feel that when one is out of sugar, or tea, or tobacco, or anything, that one's neighbours don't mind one's going and borrowing from them just to go on with : whereas, if there is any coldness amongst the members of a staircase, there is always a feeling of compunction about the proceeding, and one almost prefers—if it is after ten, and the college gates are shut so that there is no possibility of getting at a shop, and, in addition, if it is raining, and one has got one's slippers on, and doesn't care to go out into the wet to some friend on another staircase—to go without altogether. But on our staircase we are all friends : a regular little happy family, all suiting our tastes to each other, with our common gyp and our common bedmaker, and a general sort of co-operation in luxuries throughout.

Our college is of the mixed style of architecture, from the early preRaphaelite, or whatever they

are, buildings of old Bishop Somebody or other, the founder of the college, through the Renaissance built by an Earl of Something else, down to the more modern type of mixed Georgian and Queen Anne. I do not care myself for the latter portion of the building, as it appears to have been put up with regard for outward effect only, the rooms having been added afterwards: the result of which has been, that the windows come into all manner of corners, or perhaps one window has to do for two rooms; and in one or two sets the bedroom has been forgotten altogether, and has had to be put in as an afterthought, a portion of the keeping room—sometimes only a triangular portion—having had to be cut off to supply the deficiency, with no possibility of a window to light the occupant at his toilet. I consider myself fortunate in having got rooms in the original building. My rooms are a trifle low, but they are very snug, and at the same time decently large, and I have lots of windows to both of them. The builders of the olden time certainly knew how to

make themselves comfortable, even if they did produce edifices that might serve as fortresses on occasion.

All our staircases are lettered : though why mine, being one of the oldest, and from its position near the end, I should conclude the oldest of all, should be lettered W, I don't exactly know. The visitor, to use guide-book phraseology, first enters a low arched door, and, probably, because he is a visitor and not accustomed to the ways of the place, catches the top of his head against that of the door : he stumbles forward and knocks his nose against Spright's sporting door, which is usually open in a hospitable way, be Spright in or out, and when in that position extends half across the passage. Spright is a short and rather fat man : he is a classical man in my year. His rooms are furnished not so much with regard to taste as to comfort. Whenever he sees a bit of furniture, no matter what era it is supposed by connoisseurs of that sort of thing to represent, if it looks comfortable, he buys it ; and being colour-blind him-

self, he does not mind any want of harmony in the different hues of his chairs and sofa-covers that might distract any one of nicer discrimination. Spright is generally in, and if he isn't he always likes his visitors to sit down and make themselves at home till he returns : he doesn't visit the rest of the staircase much, except his opposite neighbour on the ground floor, as he is not addicted to going upstairs. Indeed, he always attributes his having got rooms where he has to the eternal fitness of things, and he is properly thankful for it.

Spright's opposite neighbour—Spright called him his *tête-à-tête*, but he is commonly supposed to have meant *vis-à-vis*—is Milstead. He is a moral science man, but he pursues most of his studies at Fenner's, the university cricket-ground—that is, if he pursues them anywhere. When cricket is out of season, he goes to the same place to run. He declares that he only does it to get exercise, without which he is miserable ; but though the main result may be that he has developed a most wiry and athletic constitution,

it has been attended with more subordinate ones in the shape of silver and pewter pots of all shapes and sizes, which form the chief decoration to his rooms. General chaos is the chief characteristic of the rest of his surroundings, as he has a habit of putting anything down anywhere whenever he comes in ; but in himself he is a very pleasant companion, and a capital sort of fellow to keep one posted up in the athletic news of the day.

Then one has to ascend a grand old flight of stairs—totally out of proportion to the doorway, but of that easy slope and height of step that our ancestors knew so well how to build—and one comes to the first landing. It is on the right of this that my rooms are situated. I will not be so egotistical as to enter into a long description of myself, but will only mention that I am a history man, and of a very domesticated disposition, and of comparatively regular habits—for the university. I don't think there is anything in me particularly out of the common. As for my rooms, they have been furnished by the advice of several friends,

most of them of different tastes—the advantage of this being, that if any of them find fault with one portion of my furniture, I can always refer them to some other, and thereby somewhat appease their disapproval.

Opposite me are the rooms of a non-resident fellow, who only comes up to audit or founder's dinners, or festivities of that sort. We see so little of him that I think I am quite justified in saying we are all on good terms with him; but his stays having always been so short as to prevent us forming anything but the most distant acquaintanceship when we meet him on the staircase either coming in or going out to and from the station, we have none of us ever had any opportunity of inspecting his rooms.

From our landing a very corkscrew kind of ladder, not at all the style of thing one would have imagined would have served as a continuation to the magnificence of the first flight, leads up to the attics, where Westbury and Hayling keep. This staircase, I may remark in passing, is a con-

stant source of danger to all who use it, even to the bedmaker and gyp, who ought, one would suppose, to have mastered it by this time, considering that they both look old enough to have been about the college ever since its foundation. The steps are steep, and shaky, and slippery. Westbury's laundress has nearly killed herself some dozen times coming down with the linen basket, to my knowledge: and as Hayling once rather morbidly remarked, if he were to die up there it is questionable if he wouldn't have to be brought down in sections, as his body is long, and it would be impossible to get him round some of the corners in one piece. If Spright's position is an example of the eternal fitness of things, Hayling's is certainly one of their occasional unfitness, as in his attic, which ranges from three feet at the side to five feet ten in the middle, he can never stand up straight, unless he puts his head out of the window. Still, he says he likes the rooms; and as he is an æsthete, and consequently is not supposed to stand upright, it does not matter so much.

And the lavish manner in which he has fitted them up in the early English style—new paper, new dado, curtains that wouldn't fit anywhere else, &c., would certainly make moving a serious matter of consideration from a pecuniary point of view. I use Hayling to keep me up to the last moves in taste.

Then there is Westbury. He is a hard-reading mathematical man, and besides that a regular perambulating encyclopædia in other things—rather a rarity in the mathematical line ; in fact, he is always ready to do a friend a good turn, and, when not required, not a bit anxious to show his learning. His rooms are like most ordinary rooms, except that they are invariably tidy. Westbury says he likes to be able to lay his hand on anything he wants, at once, as it saves such a lot of time. I have tried it for a week ; and barring the fact that I think I took up an equal amount of time at the beginning in putting away everything when I had finished, as I should have spent at the end of the interval in looking for it, I found it succeed pretty well.

When Spright isn't in, and I can't find his tea-things, it is always worth the climb up to Westbury, as I am sure of a welcome, and he *does* make good tea. Up and down the staircase are the gyp and bedmaker, and over the attics are numerous cats—and that completes our little commonwealth.

II.

THE DAILY ROUND—MORNING.

I ONCE asked Spright what was the longest word in the Greek language. He is a classical man, and consequently might be supposed to know, the more especially as he is rather fond of lightening his labours by abandoning the more humdrum way of looking at them, and acquainting himself with them from a more amusing point of view—that is, from what perhaps a classical man would consider from a more amusing point of view, though to an outsider it might appear that he was giving himself a needless amount of trouble. For instance, I have known Spright spend a whole morning, about

the time that a less volatile student would have taken to make out an entire Greek play, in discovering the Greek equivalent to "Where do you keep?" and "Come and have some lunch." He says it's all right, as a true lover of the language likes to know how the ancients talked, and not merely how they wrote. He argues, that if the future student of English, when that has become an obsolete language, wishes to know how ordinary people talked in our day, he will not read Mill's "Political Economy," or Paley's "Evidences," or even Tennyson's poetry; no, he says, not even Robert Browning's.

But to return; he told me, in reply to my question, that the longest word in the Greek language was a word which might be very well translated Resurrection-pie, and the next longest word was ὀρθρο-φοιτο-συκοφαντο-δικο-ταλαίπωρος, which being rendered into our tongue meant Early-rising-sad-litigious-informing-plaguy, and was used by the Athenians as an opprobrious epithet. It shows great knowledge of human nature, I think, in a

people that could build up a word like this ; it so exactly expresses the whole cause and effect of some of the great troubles of this life, that if more attention were paid to it by the reformers of this age they would probably go down to posterity with more than an ordinary share of glory.

If there is one thing which more than any other binds our staircase together, it is the unanimous conclusion to which we have come, that getting up early is not good either for the brain or for the temper. It is all very well for the copy-books, and other works of that description, to dissertate on the advantages of being "early to bed and early to rise;" but if it is impossible to go early to bed—as it is at Cambridge—it is as a natural consequence impossible to be early to rise. "One cannot burn the candle at both ends," another proverb—if we are to take proverbs into consideration—says ; and as, if one wishes to see anything of one's fellow-creatures, one has to burn the candle at one end, one must give up all thoughts of doing so at the other. It has been known in the annals

of our staircase, as it is at present constituted, that some one once got up to early chapel ; but he was in consequence in such a fractious mood for the rest of the day, that for a punishment he was avoided by the rest of the inhabitants for a week. I would have treated more fully of some of the nasty things he did on that occasion, if he hadn't happened to have been myself, and I never like to rake up old scores.

The above being our settled opinion, both our mutual gyp and our mutual bedmaker refrain from giving themselves the trouble of attempting to get us up. It is true that I sometimes have a vague sort of idea of some one coming into my room and pouring water into my bath, and performing other offices accessory to my comfort when I shall require to get up ; and if I have left my bedroom door open, I occasionally seem to hear sounds as though some one were playing catch with my teacups— which I fancy is my breakfast being laid either by my gyp, or, if the game seems particularly lively, by my gyp and bedmaker combined ; but all this

is part of their duty, and if they didn't do it at a certain time they wouldn't do it at all ; and so as long as they don't actually interfere with me personally, I regard it as a necessary evil—in so far as it is one at all. But when I have taken my eight hours' sleep, which I do as a duty, having also learnt that out of the copy-book, and as much more as I consider my exertions on the day before entitle me to, or the exertions I am going to take in the day just going to begin will make it prudent to take, then I arise. And as this is intended to be a record of the habits of our staircase, I think I may add, that I shall be justified in the assertion that so far our day's doings are all very much alike.

After that comes breakfast. Now breakfasts at Cambridge are of a very varied type. To take our staircase for instance, when we all happen to be breakfasting each in our own rooms, which occasionally happens when our times of rising are all so widely dispersed through the hours of the morning that it would be inconvenient for any one of

us to wait for any other, there are no less than five different types of breakfast available for the inspection of the inquirer into University habits. There is Westbury's, the reading breakfast—tea, a brown loaf, and lots of marmalade, or “squish” as it is called at Cambridge, with a book on the table treating of the functions of θ or some other equally abstruse subject required for the mathematical tripos. Westbury's breakfast service is of a homely description, and his teapot is a black china one well-seasoned, and, as I have already intimated, capable of brewing excellent tea. Then there is Hayling's æsthetic breakfast—cocoa, toast, and some ingenious and delicate concoction got out of the cookery book, which Hayling, after repeated experiments, and perhaps some hours spent in the college kitchen in personal superintendence, will have at last got the college cook to understand. Hayling also reads at his breakfast, but he reads Robert Browning, or Swinburne, or Rossetti, or something of that sort; and his service is of old blue china, with the cups and saucers all angles, so

that it is impossible for the uninitiated to avoid swamping themselves, while the cocoa and milk jugs both pour out of at least three places at once. Then descending the stair, or, more properly speaking, ladder-case, there is my breakfast. I feed off coffee, bread and butter, and two eggs. I always have two eggs, as calculated to give the maximum of nourishment with the minimum of trouble,—when I am done for, there will be a large increase in the poultry population of the United Kingdom,—and “squish” to follow. I read the particular novel I have in hand, and which I feel I must finish before I can with an easy conscience begin hard work in earnest—I am so very regular, and hate leaving things half finished. My service is of a harlequin sort, as in my time I have had endless new sets of china, the major part of which have invariably come to grief within a fortnight or three weeks of their purchase, through what my bedmaker thinks fit to describe as a “little misfortune,” which means that she, or her “help,” has fallen most of the way downstairs with the tray.

At the bottom is the training breakfast, in Milstead's room, consisting entirely of substantials, and not unfrequently washed down with beer instead of tea, Milstead still keeping to the old forms of training. And opposite him is Spright's dietary breakfast, with everything nice left out, and most things nasty substituted. Spright's great desire being to reduce himself to a respectable girth, he tries to do it by cutting his breakfast down to such a small compass, that he becomes so furiously hungry in the middle and towards the end of the day that by the time Hall is over he has quite undone all he has done in the forenoon. Milstead and Spright both read the paper, Milstead the *Sportsman*, and Spright the *Times*, Parliamentary reports from beginning to end. And, to make the details of these meals as complete as that of the others, Milstead's breakfast service is for the most part supplied from the college kitchen, and Spright's is of pure white china—the only thing in his rooms that harmonizes with anything else.

Then come pipes. We all smoke, except Mil-

stead when he is in strict training; and when we have had two or three "just one more" pipes, if it isn't too close on to luncheon time we begin work. Being all honour men, it necessarily follows that we all seek to make the most of our time, so as not to disgrace our college when the eventful period of our triposes arrives. We are all agreed that "eight hours' work, eight hours' play, eight hours' sleep," is the best method of dividing our time; and though we were at first undecided under which head meals ought to come, after repeated trials, each of us having furnished a scheme for the general use of the staircase in turn, each scheme having been put to the test for a week, from Monday to Saturday inclusive, we have at last decided that meals being not so much a luxury as a necessity, they ought not altogether to be included in the "play" division. Westbury reads steadily during his breakfasts, but we others have effected a kind of compromise between work and play, as we cannot conscientiously say that we have altogether been working when we are reading something else;

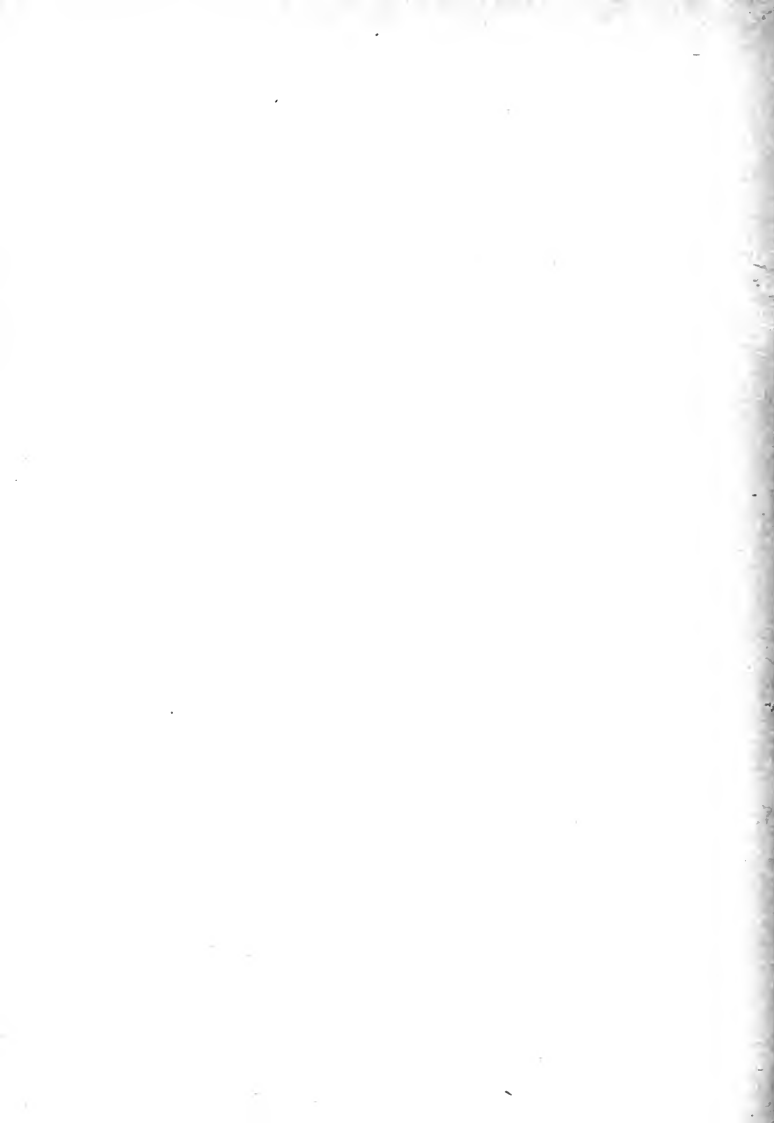
so we count our breakfast as half work and half play, and if it is not so late in the week that we have begun to forget to keep a regular record of our work, scratch off half an hour, or whatever the right proportion to the whole may be, from what Spright called "our duty-table."

It is an undoubted fact that Cambridge ought to be a place to work: one feels that so much when one is away at some other place: there are so many facilities afforded to the thirster for knowledge: and there is something in the air and the traditions that makes one feel intellectually inclined. And so it would be the place to work; and indeed, provided that when a man has just begun it doesn't happen that he finds that there is some particular book that he must have to be able to do what he wants; and after applying for it ineffectually to his neighbours, he has to get his cap and gown and go to the college library for it; and when he arrives there, it is closed on that particular day for repairs, or re-numbering, or something, and he is obliged to go and get the reference he wants in

the University library ; and there, the porter downstairs reminds him that it isn't the time for undergraduates, and won't be for another half-hour ; and when he gets back again, his bedmaker has taken the opportunity, thinking that he had gone out for the morning, of having a good clean out and general turning topsy-turvy of all his furniture, a thing he can never persuade her to do when he is gone down, and when it could not possibly interfere with him : and then if he in despair takes his books and seeks refuge in some other man's rooms, he—the other man—asks him if he hasn't got an inter-collegiate lecture in five minutes, which entails a rush to the other end of the University to be in time ; and the lecturer has gone down for the day to lecture at some affiliated college ; and he, returning slowly and disconsolately to his rooms, thinking how much this world is composed of vanities and vexations of spirit, when he is tapped gently on the shoulder by some sympathizing friend, who on hearing of his woes tells him to "never mind," but to come round to Green Street,

or King's Parade, or somewhere, and have luncheon, as So-and-so, who used to be his particular chum at school, is coming too ; and he yields to the tempter, and goes,—provided, I say, nothing of this kind happens, I will allow that a morning can be passed very profitably in the improvement of the mind : and I daresay if I were Westbury, who sports himself in all the morning, and goes on working, books or no books, at problems, so utterly forgetful of and forgotten by the world that he might be dead for all the part he takes in it, I might somehow manage better than I do ; but I am not Westbury, and my work requires a great deal more reference and original research than his does : while at the same time—being more conscientious than Hayling and Spright, who, if they have not their books at hand, put off their inquiries to some other time ; or Milstead, who takes things for granted, or else makes his own sophisms serve instead of true moral science—I do not spare myself, and thus at the end of the morning find myself very much exhausted with very little to show for

it. I remember I once really did spend a satisfactory morning: I did my eight hours straight off without an interruption. But the consequence was, that next day I was so overcome by this unparalleled exertion that I had to send for the doctor, who agreed with me that to go down and only see plays and that sort of thing was the only thing that could save my life. And since then four hours have been my maximum in the morning.



III.

THE DAILY ROUND—AFTERNOON.

WE lunch punctually at one. Some people, if they found their resolutions to commence a new system of virtue in general and punctuality in particular had met with an untimely check at their very outset, through unforeseen circumstances, as ours are so apt to do, owing to our having overslept ourselves, and consequently having had to start late on the first stage of our day's work ; some people, doubtless, would become disheartened and abandon their attempts after the Good, for that day at least, determining to make another and a better effort really to begin next morning : but it is otherwise with us : we are not so pusillanimous : we feel it

best to strike before the heat of our inclination has quite gone out ; and notwithstanding our constant failures in getting off well at the beginning of the day—so constant, that to one who does not know us well, they might almost seem to have become a thing of course—we don't allow ourselves to be disheartened, and procrastinate our efforts ; but we go on as resolutely as if we had never fallen : thus it is that day after day, though repeatedly baffled in our endeavours to begin work at nine, and finding ourselves obliged to begin at—well, say ten—the regularity of our system is not to be retarded, and though perhaps it may be with a sigh and a longing look at work unfinished that we do it, we put by our books—or leave them about, as the case may be—at the appointed hour, and resign ourselves to lunch.

Always, perhaps, excepting Westbury. If he is in the middle of a problem when the clock strikes, he always prefers to worry it out to the end. He thus very often makes himself late for lunch, and sometimes seriously inconveniences us, by making

us feel selfish when we find we have finished all the victuals without remembering him. But then he is a mathematical man, and so we have to make allowances for any eccentricities that he may develop.

It is partly for reasons of sociability, and partly because we think it is good for the gyp to carry our things up and down stairs, that we usually lunch together, turn and turn about in the different rooms, unless one of us has extraneous guests whom the others don't know, and then he dispenses his hospitality in his own quarters. I forgot this when I made the statement that Spright never went upstairs—I only meant on extraordinary occasions—lunch doesn't count. Our repast is very simple, a mere cold something, or two things, except when the one whose turn it is to order it feels more than usually kindly disposed towards his fellow-creatures, in which case he often orders something particularly unwholesome from the kitchen, with something else still more indigestible to follow, the result of which generally is that the whole of the staircase

becomes biliously inclined, and apt to view things in an unpleasant light, the mischievous effects of over good-humour being thereby counteracted.

Excepting, perhaps, Westbury, who has a singularly powerful knack of keeping his body under : and possibly Hayling, when the concoction in question looks too filling for the æsthetic taste : Spright, very often, too, says it is contrary to his dietary rules : and Milstead declares it to be bad for training : then of course the disagreeable results, not being distributed over so large an area, have to lie more heavily on the rest, as it is better that the bedmaker, seeing that she is the mother of a large family, should not be incapacitated from getting her living.

We take our lunch *à la Russe* : that is to say, that having each of us taken upon himself to manipulate the carving, and having come to the conclusion that the other four are absolutely incompetent, the dish is placed on the window-sill, or the writing-table, or a chair, or whatever happens to be acting as the side-table for the time, and we each take off

what we want. We all indulge in intoxicants to a mild extent except Westbury, who teetotals, and we make the meal more pleasant by innocent conversation of a commonplace and relaxing type : that is to say, unless any one has any particularly startling news to communicate : then we listen while we eat, and he very often comes off second best in the way of lunch.

When everybody has done, we have a smoke, and after that we ask each other what we are going to do. As we are, or at any rate ought to be, tolerably well acquainted with one another's habits, this question might appear to be somewhat superfluous, but we have got into the way of it, and, as Milstead once said, "We sort of can't help it." Milstead says, "Oh, up to Fenner's, I s'pose, to see what's going on," which being literally interpreted means that he is going to change and rush violently round and round a flat place, if it is the proper season, or else bowl at some one else's legs or have his own bowled at, if it is the season for doing that, always with the object of reducing himself to a

state of exhaustion, however unattainable experience ought to have shown him such an object must be : Westbury says, "For a grind," and Spright and Hayling and I simply answer, "Out somewhere," though Spright occasionally adds "for exercise," so as to impress upon us that his unfortunate excess of bulk arises from no fault of his own. We are none of us actually boating men, although we all subscribe to the boat club, which entitles us to wear the blazer, and entails on us the duty of occasionally going down to the river and see our college boat practising, or of running and shouting advice to it, when it is in for a race.

After we have gone through this habitual ceremony, we disperse. Milstead and Westbury go right off to carry out their definite plans, but Hayling, Spright, and myself usually tarry a little on the doorstep to deliberate on a slightly less vague method of proceeding than that which we have implied in our above-mentioned formula. It must not be supposed that because we do perhaps seem at first uncertain as to what we are going to do

that we belong to that class of men who spend their whole afternoon loafing about on King's Parade with a cigar in their mouth, or lounging into other men's rooms, or dipping into the comic papers or a novel at one or other of the clubs, or playing billiards, or ordering "things" at their tailor's or haberdasher's wherewith to startle the eyes of their admiring, or otherwise, fellow-creatures; but the fact is, that we find there are such a quantity of occupations with which the afternoon can be passed pleasantly that we cannot immediately make up our minds which to choose. We very seldom find ourselves firmly compromised with each other by anything prearranged, as we have almost invariably found it a rule that if we have tied ourselves down, and confirmed our determination by mutual adjurations and things of that sort, to do something particularly nice, something particularly nicer turns up, and puts us to great mental disquietude as to whether it would be better to sacrifice our principles, which are only perceptible to ourselves, or gain credit among our

more worldly friends for not knowing when we can make ourselves happiest: we don't, however, like to put stumbling-blocks in the way of others, so we generally choose the former course. This is of course when we are all together: when we do settle to do something independent of each other, with some one not on our staircase, who perhaps has beguiled us into the engagement a week or so previously—there are some men who are so fond of making preparations so far ahead, “taking thought for the week after next,” as Spright once put it—I have known one man, whom it is not necessary to name, settle all his time into the middle of the following term—we usually absent ourselves altogether, and either lunch out or by ourselves, so as in no way to disconcert the harmony of the rest. But at present I am considering the sort of day that occurs in the majority, say, twenty-seven days out of the fifty-two, a really ordinary day, so we will leave any other sort alone.

So here we are on the doorstep, fully armed

with our hats and walking-sticks, which, to save trouble, we usually take with us to lunch, like knights of old champing for action, and only wondering what form it is to take. According to all precedent, the afternoon ought to be the time for some of those reckless deeds to which the under-graduate is of his very nature so strongly addicted; but as I have not yet fought my Townsman, or tamed my spirited horse, or rescued my Master's daughter from any imminent peril, and thereby got engaged to her, and I don't think that any of our staircase has either, I must wait till some of these adventures, or all of them, have occurred, and content myself with the facts of my autobiography as they stand at present.

The first thing, then, that we question among ourselves is, is it wet or fine? If it is wet, or unmistakably going to be wet in the next half-hour or so, the order of the day is a grind. We don't merely go in for the reading "grind," as practised by Westbury, whose sole notions of exercise are out by the Trumpington Road and round home by

the Grantchester Fields, or else out by the Grantchester Fields and round home by Trumpington; or the "training" grind, as practised by Milstead, which consists of a somewhat longer round, but only comes off on a Sunday; but we fix on some object of interest in the neighbourhood, that we have been able to discover at about the required distance, and set off for a good three hours' trudge, "as ordered by the doctors," Spright is always careful to remark, enlivening our walk with some more of that species of intellectual discourse that may be expected of us. Though, as may already have been gathered from my remarks, we are none of us of that wildly and wiry athletic type, that sees no good in anything but an enormous development of skin, muscle, and bones, that might possibly be useful if we were destined to be coal-heavers or bargees, but if over-cultivated is apt to create an inconvenient craving for it, when it can't be got, as will probably be the case at the bar or in some public office, yet we like to see those who take delight in such things, so always contrive

to take such of them as we can on our way, to satisfy ourselves as to how they are getting on.

We are all tolerably fair walkers, but we once rather overdid ourselves both in time and distance. It arose from a mistake in our calculations as to how far off Ely ought to be. Spright had got a patent machine called a Wheelometer, I think, which we applied, according to the directions enclosed with it in its box, to the map, and made out that Ely was twelve miles off. Hayling assured us that he had always heard from everybody that it was sixteen, but we would not believe him, and when he persisted in his obstinacy, we told him, at any rate, to come with us and see. So, he still protesting, we set off, counting on arriving at Ely in three hours, seeing the Cathedral, and coming back by train. Unfortunately he was right, and the Wheelometer proved not to be so infallible as the advertisement had said, and we did not arrive at Ely till at the end of four hours, only just having time to ascertain that the Cathedral was closed for cleaning on that day only for many

years, and then rush to the station to catch the last train back to Cambridge by the skin of our teeth, just as it had got half-way out of the station, and we were late for Hall after all. However, we had a very pleasant walk, as I had lately been reading "Hereward the Wake," and we disputed about the places we passed being connected with him or not all the way along, the others having the advantage of not having read the book, and so not being prejudiced ; but we have not repeated the experiment on foot since, though, once, Spright having come up at the beginning of the term with a game leg and a great experience of driving, as he gave out, derived from accompanying his brother on a tour on wheels in Devonshire while down, the latter, I have reason to believe, managing the reins all the time, and he (Spright) being extremely anxious to display his skill, and, moreover, having become a man of fortune, through a distant relation dying and leaving him twenty pounds, free of legacy duty, in her will, we hired a trap at his expense on another rainily inclined

afternoon, and determined to make another attempt on the Cathedral. This, however, only resulted in our finding ourselves, at about the time when we ought to have been about four miles from home on the return, at not quite that distance off it on the outward journey, with the pony, an animal that we had selected for his evident quietness and unfitness to bolt with us, struggled out of his harness in his efforts to escape the stimulations that we all had to combine in administering to him to induce him to advance at a somewhat faster pace than a walk, and none of us with the remotest idea how to put him in again. We had to tie him to the vehicle in the best manner that we could, and take turns to lead him back through as much of the back ways of the town as possible, and pretend to any one we met that we had had a serious carriage accident. With the livery-stable keeper, however, I am afraid our statement of our belief that there was something the matter with the pony, and of our having unharnessed him owing to our great regard for his owner's feelings, did not quite go

down. So we have never seen the inside of Ely Cathedral yet ; but it cannot be said of us that we have never tried, as is the case with so many people who have lived for years in London, and have never seen St. Paul's.

But this a digression. To return to my immediate subject. If it is, fine then there are two further subdivisions to be considered, early or late ? If it is comparatively early, and the season for lawn-tennis, the chances are that we find a fourth party, change into flannels, and make all expedition to the college cricket-ground, on the chance of finding a court vacant. If there isn't one to be had, we generally only have to wait a little, until some other set, who have not been so assiduous at their studies as ourselves, and have therefore enabled themselves to begin their relaxation at any hour in the fore-part of the day, have finished and then we nip into their places. We have rare games : Hayling's peculiar style of service, in which neither he, nor anybody else can tell whether the ball is coming in or out, and when it has pitched,

where it intends to go after that, Spright's laudable though futile endeavours to cut down close over the net, which he might succeed in doing if he were taller, or even if he stood on a chair, but can't under the present conditions, and the too evident admiration of the outsider for the latent genius of our staircase in the lawn-tennis line, all combine to make us feel at the end, when we are talking about it afterwards, that we have passed a most profitable afternoon. Spright always declares that when he has at last managed that cut down, he will enter with Hayling for the Wimbledon championship.

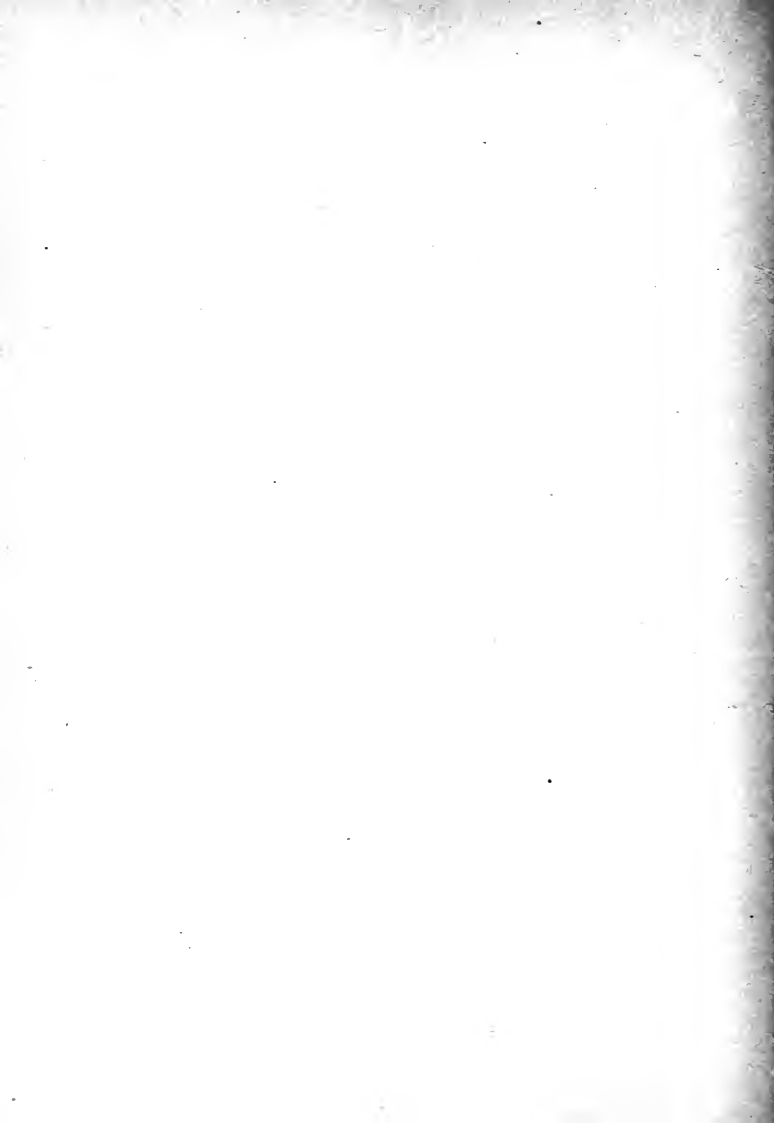
If it is too late for lawn-tennis, perhaps we go out bicycling. Cambridge is peculiarly adapted for bicycling; there are countless good roads round about, and they are all as flat as the palm of one's hand, with the exception of the Gog-Magog Hills, which present an incline quite as steep as a decently-sized railway-bridge, something to swagger about having gone over, if we feel energetic enough to try at them. Hayling rides

a 60 in., I ride a 52 in., and Spright, by an abnormal stretch of leg, a 48 in. By a mathematical process, which Westbury kindly worked out for us, we manage to adapt the revolutions of our wheels to each other, so as to keep level for the first two miles or so. Then Hayling gradually forges unconsciously ahead, I equally unconsciously try to keep up with him, and poor Spright after treadling his utmost, until he assumes the appearance of a turkey-cock in the face, and begins to pant out that he thinks something is going wrong with his knee or his heart or his bicycle, at last suddenly collapses, and is left sitting disconsolately on a mile-stone, watching me out of sight, and Hayling out of sighter. Thence, when he has recovered his breath, he lounges, if the expression can be used of a bicycle, back to the club-rooms, and goes home to make tea, and Hayling and I rejoin him at intervals.

Or occasionally we go up the Freshmen's River to Byron's Pool, in a rowing-boat or in canoes. As a rule we prefer the latter, as my medium size,

Hayling's length of leg, and Spright's roundness of body, make it difficult to find a vessel that will conveniently accommodate our respective requirements. The ignorant may scoff at this what they perhaps consider dilatory form of aquatic; but if boating on the lower river requires more power and endurance, on the Freshmen's River it certainly requires no small skill in the more technical departments of navigation, especially in some parts, where, if two boats meet, it is questionable if one of them will not have to be lifted over the other, not to speak of the general tortuosity of the stream.

But wherever we go, our system recalls us to tea and work from five to Hall time. But the kettle never will boil under a quarter of an hour, and the tea takes five minutes to draw, and five minutes to cool to a drinkable temperature after it is poured out, and Hall is at six, and it takes ten minutes to get ready for that, so perhaps the less said about the work the better, except from a warning point of view.



IV.

OUR DAILY ROUND—EVENING.

THERE are some men who consider it beneath their dignity to go to Hall; at some colleges, perhaps, it is more excusable than at others, in proportion to the various degrees of goodness or badness in the respective kitchens. But why some of our men should take glory in regularly absenting themselves from the general dinner, which they are bound to pay for a certain number of times in the week, whether they eat it or not, in order that they may indulge their pampered appetites on very nearly, if not exactly, the same dishes, only at twice the price, in their own rooms, where the remains have to stay at the sweet will of the bed-

maker, until it pleases her to come and clear them away, I don't exactly know, unless it is out of what Americans call "pure cussedness." Our staircase invariably goes to Hall unanimously, except on occasions when it wouldn't suit us to do so. It is the fastest, cheapest, and most direct way of getting dinner at Cambridge, not to speak of our always being able to meet any one we want to see there, if he doesn't happen to be stopping away.

I can speak from experience, having tried both methods of eating my dinner—partly in order that I might discover the delights of having it in my rooms, so as not to form too hasty a judgment of my "fellow-students," as I suppose the *Daily Telegraph* would call them; but chiefly for more personal reasons, to see if I should economize time by so doing. It may perhaps seem absurd, when I state it as the result of my experiment, that the whole process of having a mutton-chop and vegetables by oneself in one's rooms, at six—the same time as Hall—takes, at the least, three times as

long as to have three courses in Hall, with about seventy others ; but it is a fact, nevertheless. For we will say that five others besides yourself have likewise decided to partake of some trifle of the same sort by themselves, at the same time—we will be charitable, and say that they have all likewise done it in order that they may be able to start early to make up arrears of work. Your rooms being nearest the kitchen, or furthest off it, or the ones in the middle between these two extremes, as the case may be, the cook's boy who has been despatched with these six dinners determines, when he is mapping out in his mind the best method of leaving them at the different rooms, that it will be most convenient for him to come to you last ; and by the time he has got there it is ten minutes past six, and the first course is over in Hall. Then you will find that your bedmaker has forgotten all about your wanting to feed by yourself in your own rooms, and you have to yell for her to come and lay your table, till you nearly crack your lungs, without producing the slightest

sign of acknowledgment from her—which, considering she is talking to the porter in his lodge on the other side of the court, is not altogether to be wondered at—and your gyp is waiting in Hall, and cannot by any means be got at. And when at last you think you will lay your things yourself, you discover they have not been brought up, or down, according to circumstances, from the rooms where you have been lunching. And so on, until by the time you have overcome all these difficulties and have at last got settled down to your chop, not only is it cold, and the gravy greasy, but you hear the other men coming out of Hall. Then you have to gobble up your food without losing any more time—an additional reason, by the bye, for keeping to yourself being that you have come to the conclusion that a meal eaten slowly occasionally is an agreeable change from the usual hurry of Hall—and when you have done you begin to feel an uncomfortable void, which further convinces you that you have been wrong in supposing that you habitually eat too much, and that

a mutton-chop and vegetables are enough for any one to subsist on, and you have to make up the deficiency by lots of bread and "squish," which is a condiment of which you never know when you have had enough until you have got a good way on the other side of too much of it; and when that is finished, it is past seven, and the other men have had their coffee and smoke, and their chat, and are quite game for work again—that is, those that are going to work, like yourself—while you have still all the digestive process to go through before you can begin comfortably. Then, not liking to disturb others by your compulsory idleness, or to break through your resolution of not leaving your rooms till that piece of work is done, you sport your door and take up a novel, to occupy the interval till your things are cleared away with a new chapter, which just happens to be the longest in the book, and when that sort of thing begins, it may be nine or ten before you can get your books out.

As a rule, therefore, our staircase goes to Hall.

Our Hall is, I believe, of very ancient date—some say it is of the fourteenth century, while others, on the contrary, say that it isn't; it is of a sort of conventual refectory type, very high, with a worm-eaten-looking roof, that at some period has been whitewashed, and at another painted blue with gold stars about it, and at a still more subsequent period has been subjected to a faint attempt at a scraping by some one else; it has large beams across, and two lanterns at the top, and the whole building is rather long and very draughty. There are big windows all the way down the sides at a considerable height from the floor, all in the perpendicular style—at least that's what Hayling, who professes to know a great deal about architecture, once told me, though I can't say I ever saw a horizontal window myself—and odd panes here and there are occupied with the armorial bearings of those members of the college who have either benefited it or been benefited by it in by-gone days, with vacancies left for us in days to come. Round the walls, which are panelled, and

for venerableness and symptoms of dry-rot are not unlike the roof, are the portraits of sundry old gentlemen, most of them apparently taken after a good dinner in Hall. The high table is raised on a daïs across the end, and the B.A. table is a little to one side, the four tables for the under-graduates being arranged two and two down the middle. We have four tables, rather for symmetry than for anything else, as Hall is hardly ever so full as to make them all required. We generally, indeed, only fill up two tables altogether, though perhaps the late comers sometimes encroach on to a third.

We five usually go in a body, and immediately we get inside the door disperse to our several places. We have all established our places now, but they are not together, as we think it best to keep apart from each other sometimes, for though we are always firm allies, we would not for the world have it thought that we want to form a clique. Milstead gets down somewhere at the bottom near the door, among a lot of other giants of his own type, who jest athletically, and dine heavily off

beefsteak with roast beef to follow, and drink unlimited beer ; and we others sit about among rather quieter men, Spright always taking the top of the table, and acting as a kind of wet blanket to the appetites of those in his neighbourhood by informing them of the various kinds of deaths that are lurking in the different pots ; though he somehow seems to contrive to make a tolerably satisfactory dinner himself on most nights. This top seat is a standing point of dispute between Spright and the waiters ; they never will acknowledge his right to it, and never lay the requisites for a place there ; but Spright declares that he can't sit on the benches that run down the side of the table—the truth is, that when he does perch on one of them his legs won't touch the ground—so he makes a nightly expedition to the parts about the high table and captures a chair, drags it in an ostentatiously noisy manner across the stone floor, and deposits it in triumph at his self-constituted place ; then he borrows a knife from his right-hand neighbour, and a fork from his left, and sits down,

defying the waiters with his head and as much of him below his chin as appears over the table, which, as the chairs are considerably lower than the benches, isn't much.

It is not at all necessary to have a fixed place in Hall, but the great advantage of it is that thereby the waiter to that peculiar part of the table comes to know one. I have a faithful waiter now, who looks after me capitally. He always brings me the *menu* at the beginning, and I settle what I am going to have throughout, and don't have to get what I can in the hand-to-mouth sort of fashion that others have ; who, in the first place, having migrated that evening from the other table, or even from the other end of the same table, are as perfect strangers to the waiter as if they belonged to another college, and do not raise the slightest feeling of interest in his soul ; and in the second place, foolishly put off all thought except for the course they are actually engaged on, and when they want something else, have to secure a waiter and consult him as to what there ought to be, but

which, when they send him for it, isn't to be had. My waiter, I believe, secures everything for me at once. Sometimes he comes to me and says, "Nice chop, sir, I've put under the side-table ; would you like it ?" Or at the beginning of dinner, after a return from a reconnoitring expedition to the kitchen, "There's an apple tart, sir, coming"—apple tart is a weakness of mine, and he knows it—"shall I get a bit for you ?" For it is all very well for people who dine at home, and have their dinners and their servants all to themselves, to say that this savours of epicureanism, or greediness, or whatever they like to call it, but it is a very different matter when seventy hungry men are craving for their dinner ; and this is only one of the many instances of self-preservation.

When the dons have come in, one of the scholars reads a Latin grace, which no one in particular understands, very often least of all the man who is reading it ; who, if he chances to be a mathematical or science man, and scorns the niceties of classical learning, sometimes inflicts upon us, his suffering

fellow-diners, such a string of false quantities and mispronunciations, that it is enough to send the cold shivers up any one's back—but we all know about when the end ought to come, and are all prepared to flop down into our seats at the right moment. Then begins a clatter of plates and dishes, and a rushing about of waiters, who, marvellous to relate, never come into collision with each other, and a general babel of voices ; and in twenty minutes or so all is over.

When we have got out of Hall, we lounge out in twos and threes into the court, and, if it is light, dawdle about there a little ; if not, we go round the sacred precincts of the grass—if the porter or any one else that matters is looking, or over it if he isn't—either to some man's rooms, who has asked two or three of us in, or else to our own with a few men whom we have invited for tea or coffee, according to the taste of the majority, or the capacity of the inviter's or his neighbour's stores. Our staircase usually sticks to the same plan of making the most of itself amongst outer society by our all

separating for this part of the evening—unless one of us wants to borrow something from the other. It is supposed that this custom is handed down from the old monastic times, when the monks used to collect together after their meals in knots of three or four for purposes of meditation. In more modern circles, it is to be traced in the habit of partaking of dessert after dinner.

We hand round biscuits to fill up the time while the kettle is boiling, and perhaps fruit, if it is in season, and occasionally wines ; though we don't go in so much for wine in our college as they do in others.

There is, by the way, a good deal of philosophy to be got out of biscuits. Spright taught me that the result of a statistical inquiry he made into the subject was, that a box of ordinary biscuits is economical, and can be made to last through a quarter of a term at least—the harder and drier the longer. But mixed biscuits are a rash thing to give to one's guests. There is an attractiveness about them that is ruinous to the owner. Set

three men out of training at a box of mixed biscuits, and they will have finished it before they know where they are ; with the exception of the cracknels, which will imperceptibly but steadily settle down to the bottom of the box. Of course there are some variations of this rule, as there are some men who make certain sorts of biscuits, other than mixed biscuits, their speciality ; and you may unfortunately ask them in, and they will finish off the box you calculated on lasting a fortnight in a single sitting. There are even some men who revel in cracknels ; but I know these by this time, and always ask them in as a sort of gleaners to a mixed biscuit box.

At eight o'clock work-time begins for those that are really in for their triposes soon, or who have got nothing better to do ; and the various companies break up, unless there is something particularly jolly in the way of music or conversation to keep them together. Spright's party is usually very late in dispersing ; and Hayling, as a rule, is at about this time getting into what he calls the

swing of the musical practice that he and some other kindred spirits assemble to carry on in the evenings, with a cornet, and flute, and a big fiddle, the mastery of which latter Hayling has been engaged in acquiring from the age of six, I think he told me—it may have been longer, but at any rate he hasn't got any further than the first bar of "Home, sweet home"—and is beginning to make himself a nuisance to Westbury, who has got at his problems, and Milstead, who has sported, and extended himself on his sofa for what I suppose he considers his training snooze, not to speak of myself, and any one who may be with me at the time—until we generally end by going in a body to expostulate.

On particular evenings of course we have different societies to attend, debating or otherwise ; such as the Mammoth—Milstead's, for natural historical researches ; or the Pentagon—a Tennyson club to which I belong, consisting of six members, whence, I suppose, its name ; or the Union, where Westbury goes regularly every Tuesday, primed

with facts and quotations to speak, but somehow never has gone 'off yet, &c., &c. ; or there may be some performance in the Guildhall, which, if it is worth seeing, and is not likely to result in a disturbance through the presence of some of the rowdier elements of the University, we usually make up a party and take a family ticket to attend.

If we are not out of reach of it, the curfew reminds of our work again at nine. Some one says, "Bother! there's the curfew! I must go and work." To which some one else adds, "So must I." And if we can get safely to our rooms without being tempted in anywhere else, we really begin.

And at ten comes cocoa, if we want it, in Spright's rooms ; and after that, if there is any go left in us, we make up our arrears before bedtime ; and so ends the day—not to speak of its not unfrequently beginning another.

V.

A NOTE ON FRESHMEN.

THIS being the October term, and the beginning of the academical year—that is, at least, the beginning of the first term of it, because really the whole thing starts at the Commencement, which falls somewhere about June—so like the University this, always trying to be different from the rest of the world—well, leaving all that alone for the curious to debate upon the why and the wherefore of it, this is the time when we are overrun with freshmen. Not that we have any on our staircase, of course ; that is an evil which our insoluble union, which has hitherto prevented any of us from moving on to anywhere else, and so leaving room for an

intruder, has saved us from ; but still, everybody up here knows something about some freshman—either he is a relation, or he knows him because he lives near him at home ; or he was once at school with him, a long time ago ; or he was a great friend of his brother, when he was up here ; or his sister has married his second cousin twice removed ; or he has been asked to look after him by a mutual friend—and we are none of us, by any means, exceptions to this rule : on the contrary, without going into statistics, I should say roughly that we know about as many freshmen as the whole of the rest of the University—that is, taking us in a lump, myself with the other men. Individually, I only know six really necessary ones ; but the other men know an awful lot : something like thirty or forty apiece, I should say—at least, I know that they are always crowding up and down the staircase in shoals ; and the other day, when I came out of my rooms, they were standing at the bottom of the corkscrew in a *queue*, like people at the ticket-office of a theatre in the

crowded pantomime season, waiting for their turn to go up to Hayling or Westbury, as there was only room for one at a time.

Of course it is rather inconvenient for freshmen, that rule—I don't know who made it, but I don't think it would be at all a bad thing to abolish it—that they mayn't leave cards, but must go on calling till they find you in. Now when I first came up, I called on all the men who were above me and who had left cards on me, and if they weren't in, I didn't call any more, but left our meeting to chance, and then when I was at last introduced, I took care to mention that I had been to see them, but had not ever found them in, leaving them to infer as they pleased how often "ever" meant: and if I never happened to meet them at all, why then the loss was theirs. And as for my own freshmen, having such a few who had any real calls upon me, I asked four of them to breakfast together, and so disposed of them at once.

None of them had ever seen each other before, by

the way, and a nice incongruous breakfast it was ; one was a dissenter, the second a high churchman, the third a strongly athletic man, and the other a reading man, and they had absolutely nothing in common. And as for the other two, whom I reserved for a separate breakfast, because I had known them at school, and when there they had been always together, quite the sort of boys that would have received the nicknames of Damon and Pythias, or Castor and Pollux, or the Siamese Twins, or anything else that expressed inseparability, if they had been put into a school-book ; and I very reasonably thought that I should not have the slightest difficulty with them ; but as it resulted, since I had last seen them some difference had sprung up in that mysterious way that such things do happen in at school, which had rendered them enemies for life, and they were not even on ordinary terms of civility. They didn't actually "go for" each other, but it was a very uncomfortable situation for me.

Spright's plan was to appoint a particular hour

for his men : " In from two to three in the afternoon on any day," he put on his cards ; and accordingly on two successive days a constant tattoo was being kept up at his door by a host of freshmen, eager for his acquaintance ; quite a fruitless exhibition of zeal, however, as on both occasions he had been unexpectedly called away for the afternoon, forgetting all about his engagement. On the third day, however, when I had informed him of the fact, he determined to what he called " take the bull by the horns "—though where the bull or the horns came in, in the case of freshmen, I must acknowledge I failed to see—and having devoted his morning to the preparation of a paper of remarks suitable to the general capacities of his anticipated visitors, he took up his position in his armchair for the reception. At half-past three he came up and told me that he had disposed of sixteen of them very satisfactorily ; some of them had been rather too tardy in their departure, but when he found that the case, he had got them on to the subject of smoking, and offered them a cigarette,

and four out of five of them had succumbed, and had to leave hurriedly.

We have been discussing the subject amongst ourselves a good deal lately, and we have come to the conclusion that, as a rule, the freshmen of this year are vastly deteriorated from what they were in our time. I don't know whether our predecessors thought so of us, but I don't suppose they did ; at least, they never mentioned anything of the sort to us : not, of course, that we ever do so to these men, as it wouldn't be civil, and we have to disguise our feelings. But there is a free-and-easy manner about these—they can hardly be called men, seeing that it is only three or four months since they were mere boys at school—that is disagreeable to us older men, and makes us wish to let them know their place better, only we don't exactly know how to set about it. Now, when we first came up, and went to call upon any one, we exhibited the proper amount of nervousness that was due to him as an object of our respect : we distinctly remember that we never exactly

knew what was the proper thing to do with our hat, whether we should keep it in our hands, or put it down on the floor—where, by the way, if we did put it, it always seemed somehow to be in the way—or where we should put our stick—we believe, as far as we recollect, that we usually leant it up against the table or the wall at such an angle that it invariably fell down with a loud clatter in the middle of the interview, and our host tried to set us at our ease by removing it altogether to some other place, so that we had timidly to remind him of it when we went away—that is to say, if we could summon up courage to do so at all; and we always chose the hardest chair in the room, even if it was put right away in the back somewhere, and dragged it out regardless of all obstacles, murmuring something, if our callee suggested that there were more comfortable seats to be had, about our preferring a hard one; and then we made a few incoherent remarks, and got away as soon as possible, feeling very hot and thankful that the interview was over, our only satisfaction

being that the other man must have felt just the same. Of course, there were exceptions to this rule ; when we found that the man whom we had inflicted ourselves on was a good sort of fellow, who liked to see us make ourselves at home, we got on all right, and there didn't seem to be any awkwardness about the proceeding at all ; but for the most part, we don't think we behaved in any way as a freshman ought not.

But all these things have changed now ; whether it is owing to the advance of over-education, which makes those behind us come up a great deal too fast, or what it is, I can't say, but I do like to be treated with more deference than freshmen nowadays seem to think necessary.

For instance, some of those whom I have known a little about, but to whom, unlike the six whom I have mentioned, beyond my leaving one card upon them I did not consider I need pay any particular attention.

Here I am, sitting at my knee-hole table, writing a letter, or perhaps scribbling off an idea which I

intend to work up some day, and send to that estimable paper, the *Cambridge Review*, which is constantly dunning me to contribute something to its columns from my "valuable pen." I have a whole Stone's Patent Box full of these ideas ; but, what with other ones following fast on their wake and having to be written down, and Tripos-work, and fifty other engagements that go on accumulating day after day, I have got so frightfully in arrears with everything, that I don't at present see the remotest possibility of ever getting them into shape——well, then comes a knock at my door. "Come in!" I shout ; and a man, whom I have never seen before, and who, as far as I know hitherto, I do not care if I shall never see again, opens the door and comes in.

He doesn't take off his hat until he has shut the door behind him ; there is nothing in his entrance of that graceful gliding in, and simultaneously shutting the door, combined with the removal of the hat, which, if you can manage it without getting your stick caught in the handle and drop-

ping it, is so effective, and serves so well to impress the person on whom you have intruded in your favour—oh no! he comes in and then turns his back full on you to shut the door, and then, as if by an after-thought, he recollects that he has got his hat on, and removes it.

Then he says, "Mr. So-and-so, I think," in a way which makes one wish that one was anybody else for the moment, and at the same time he moves towards your best armchair. I say "Yes," and rise from my writing table, and also move towards the same chair.

"Oh, I'm What'shisname—," here he has gained upon you a little—"and my aunt knows your aunt, and she told me—" here I see that, even if I do hurry myself, the least I can effect will be that we shall arrive at the chair in a dead heat, and I reflect that it won't look well if we have to struggle for its possession, so I give up, resolving, however, not to let the next freshman do me in this way—"to come and see you."

Here he flops himself down in the chair, and looks me all over with an air of satisfaction.

"Oh yes," I reply, smothering my indignation at his forwardness under the cloak of welcome as far as possible, "I've been to see you—" here he crosses his legs in a nonchalant sort of way that annoys me, and makes me long to say, "Uncross your legs," but I don't—"I suppose you saw my card."

No, he hasn't noticed my card—'pon my word the fellow's insolence is becoming past bearing; he supposes "it has got shoved away somewhere by his landlady amongst the others"—*my* card, if you please, "shoved amongst *the others*;" but he has written out a list of people he knows he's got to call upon sooner or later, and he's been taking them in order, and has just got to me this afternoon: don't I think it's rather a good dodge? "Don't I what?"—I am fuming by this time. "Oh yes, yes; it is an awfully good dodge," and I laugh hysterically.

Hullo! there's his hat and stick lying across my table, the muddy point of his stick in close proximity with one of my prize books. I move it hastily; he does not jump up, as he ought, apolo-

gize, and try to drag it out of my hands, in order to save me the trouble of putting it somewhere else, but simply remains where he is, and looks at me. Then *I* sit down in the hard chair, and try to recover myself sufficiently to think of something to say.

He saves me the trouble, however, by starting the question of boating. "Do I row?" I say, "Not much; I suppose you've been tubbing; freshmen always get caught their first term." He is long past tubbing; lor, yes, why he's been rowing in one of his College Trial Eights for the last fortnight. Then it comes out that he is a great oar, stroke of the eight at his public school, and all that. I change the subject to bicycling. No, he doesn't bicycle, but he does worse—he thinks bicycling is the sort of thing only "smugs" do. I bicycle; I don't tell him so, however, but go on to something else. And so on, I feeling as if I were growing smaller and smaller, and he bigger and bigger, till, as a last resource, I ask him when he can come to lunch. "I am very sorry," but I look

at my watch and find I must go out. "You see, being a reading man, I have to be rather jealous of my time." We settle a day for lunch, and leave the room, he rising slowly, and coming out after me ; yes, he has actually driven me out of my own room. Then we part, and I think that I have let myself in for another jolly hour or so with him, and I must get Milstead to come and meet him on his own ground.

So this is what we are coming to now ! No wonder the University is losing ground in the favour of the outside world, as a seminary of manners and education.

I remember perfectly well the first night I came up, how Westbury, who was a bye-term man, and so had had some little experience in University life, came down and knocked at my door, and proposed that we should know each other as we were to be on the same staircase, and then carried me off from amid the chaos of my own boxes and crates to have some tea up in his room, where everything had had a whole term to

get snug. Dear old Westbury! I can see him now, beaming at me over the teapot through his spectacles, and conversing agreeably meanwhile that the kettle was boiling; not pumping me as to my antecedents, or trying to put me up to anything that might be useful to me—I hate a man that does that: it always makes one feel as if he thought that one was an idiot—there was nothing of that sort in Westbury’s conversation, but it was of that kind that made one feel that he was the sort of man one would like to be friends with at once.

And Hayling? Oh, Hayling I was introduced to when I went in all my newly-acquired dignity of cap and gown to pay my formal call on the tutor: we were, so to speak, shoved at each other as neighbours. I recollect Hayling came in a chimney-pot hat; and Milstead was there as a freshman too, and I spoke to him of my own accord as we returned to our rooms, and after having walked the whole way there from the tutor’s a little distance apart, I found that he turned in at

the same staircase : then he invited me in, and we fraternized, I believe, chiefly over the dire offence that Hayling had committed against our notions of Cambridge propriety by walking about in a chimney-pot hat, which we knew was not at all the correct thing to do ; and we voted that Hayling must be a fool, and that we wouldn't have anything to do with him.

Spright missed a year. He had come up the year before us, but his " health " had compelled him to stay down for the whole of our first year. I remember how we used to wonder what sort of a man he was, and how the bedmaker was always holding him up to us as a model of what the modern under-graduate ought to be : how " Mr. Spright never did "—when, for instance, we wished the major part of a cold chicken to come up a second time, instead of disappearing in a marvellous and unaccountable manner ; or how " Mr. Spright always did "—when we objected to having more than two tons of coal brought in in a fortnight : and how he was always coming up in a few

days, but somehow never did, as he always wrote at the last moment to say he had had a relapse, and couldn't: and how his rooms were being constantly put in requisition by some of the fellows or junior members of the college for any of their friends who might be coming up for a night: until at last we almost began to suspect that, like the famous Mrs. Harris, "there never was no such person." And then, when we had been up a year, and had time to settle ourselves down, and had forgiven Hayling his chimney-pot hat, and, alas! had completely laid aside our original awe towards Westbury, and had taken to rather chaffing him instead, when we returned after the Long, we were received with the news that Mr. Spright had at last come up again; he had, I believe, received an intimation from the dons that if he didn't, he would have to give up his rooms, and take lodgings in the town, as, though he was paying for them quite properly, he was keeping other people out of them. Then we deliberated among ourselves as to whether we ought to call on him first, or wait till

he called on us ; but he settled that matter by coming in that same evening, and borrowing Milstead's matches.

And so we have gone on. After all, we may have changed a good deal ourselves. Perhaps it may be—I won't assert it positively as a fact, but some philosopher may take it in hand and make something out of it—perhaps it may be that this partly accounts for the striking difference that we have observed between the freshman as he ought to be, and as he is.

VI.

A NIGHT WITH MILSTEAD.

"I SHOULD say, since you ask me about it," said our Boat Captain deliberately, as he reclined in his arm chair, with his legs hung gracefully over the back of another—it was an attitude he was particularly fond of; he said he felt more easy when like that, than in any other position—and his left arm extended from his shoulder at full length like a semaphore at right angles to the rest of his body; "I should say that the most exciting race I have ever been in was that one on the third night of last year's Lent races."

The scene was Milstead's rooms, and the *dramatis personæ* were Milstead himself, Spright, Hayling,

myself, two out-college men of Milstead's own type, one of whom had been dining with Milstead in Hall, and the other with the Captain of our College Boat Club, the individual already described as having propounded the opening remark of this chapter, who completed the party. Milstead and his guest, and the Captain and his guest, having met together at the guest-table, and being of the same tastes, had all coalesced, and the consequence was a general adjournment of the whole party to Milstead's rooms.

I have already mentioned the usefulness of Milstead himself, as an authority on the athletic doings of the University; but he is of further service to us as a means of introduction to other men of the same class. We have great advantages in this line on our staircase: it is very often the case that a rowing man will scorn a reading man, and *vice versa*; or that both will look down from their different points of view on a man whose only object is to get through life pleasantly with the least possible trouble; or that all three will join

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in treating an æsthetic man as a prig ; but our community of life has destroyed all these barriers, and having no compunctions as to using each other's things indiscriminately, neither have we any as to associating with each other's friends and trying to adapt ourselves to the different kinds of company that we thus find ourselves brought into. I will engage that, owing to this, there are few rowing or athletic men that know as much about high art as Milstead, or few æsthetic men who can talk about the river with as few mistakes as Hayling. And this is taking extreme cases.

The talk, as was only probable, considering the rooms in which it had been taking place, had chiefly turned on doings on flood and field, and gradually, though of course not all at once, we others had settled down to it in deference to our guests—for though not actually our guests, we considered that they were in a great measure to be considered as such, seeing that they were being entertained by a member of our staircase, and, for aught we knew, might be consuming our own tea and to-

bacco. We had listened to anecdotes of the running-path, marvellous records, extraordinary feats of jumping, capped by others of the same kind relating to the river, and we had drawn them all in with the intention of reproducing them at some future time in Hall or somewhere, when, amongst our own friends, we might thereby gain some respect as oracles on subjects on which they were less well informed ; and we had as yet, by preserving a judicious silence when we were not certain as to our knowledge of some details, and only venturing a remark on some common-places that any one might be supposed to know, succeeded very creditably in not incurring any rebuke for our ignorance from the more experienced talkers. I had once, indeed, hazarded it as my individual opinion that a race on the Cam could not be so exciting as one on the Thames, as it was a matter of course that in a bumping race the boat that won must be out and out the best of the two, whereas in a breast-race a difference of half a length would decide the victory ; but this, I think, instead

of being productive of any signs of displeasure from my auditors that I should so much as dare to express an idea of my own, had rather gained me κῦδος as being a man who knew something about rowing, though perhaps not as it was practised at the University. However, when I had heard all that was to be said in favour of boat-racing on the Cam, I conceded my opinion, and agreed that at any rate a bumping race must be very exciting, and requested the Captain to relate any example that he knew of its being so. It was this request of mine that had called forth his above-mentioned remark.

I may as well here insert a short description of the Captain of our Boat Club. He is of a medium height—I should say, very medium—that is, he is rather shorter than I am myself; but what he lacks in stature of body, he effectually makes up for in length of arm and general breadth and depth all over, so that his cubical contents quite come up to, and even considerably exceed, the standard of a good, strong rowing-man. I can't say I ever saw

his lungs, but they must be of the size of a pair of blacksmith's bellows, for I have heard him coaching the boat quite distinctly when I have been crossing Charon's grind at one end of the University course, and he has been on the towing-path somewhere about Grassy; and any one who knows anything about Cambridge can judge for himself of the powers of his voice from that. It is to him that the credit is due of having restored our Boat Club to its former glory: for years before he became Captain we had been going steadily down, down, down, till the less sanguine ones of the College began to calculate as to how many more nights it would take for us to get bumped right off the river; but during the two years of his supremacy we have resumed an upward career, and have all but regained the place which we formerly held before our run of ill-luck. He has a way of doing things in a pleasant manner, and that has had a great deal to do with his success. Given a Boat Club and an unpopular Captain, and down that boat will be pretty certain to go: but—

well, to put it shortly, as I remember Milstead once saying apropos of something, "Contrariwise, t'other way on."

"Well, fire away," said Milstead, as he took up his poker and commenced a vigorous onslaught on a block of coal, until I should have been afraid of his knocking the back of the fireplace through, if I hadn't been aware that it was his way of stirring the fire. "Now, Hayling, you need not go," as Hayling attempted for about the seventh time that evening to take the opportunity of a fresh period in the conversation to escape in the hope of being perhaps able even at that late hour to overtake some of his fleeting resolutions. "Stop a bit and hear Oxden's story out; have another cup of tea." Hayling gave it up again, and sat down.

"There isn't anything to fire away about," said the Captain. "I didn't say I was going to tell a story: I only stated a fact, and I don't see why you should jump at me in that manner as if I had."

"Bosh!" said Milstead; "as if I hadn't heard you tell that story over and over again. You mean about that close race to Ditton, and cox, and Grassy, and all. Now don't go getting modest."

"I didn't say I was modest," replied the other indignantly repelling the charge. "But the story isn't worth telling, and you've heard it—"

"Oh, do tell us," we all said at once; "we've never heard it, if Milstead has."

The Captain's only response was to refill his pipe. But at this moment the door opened, and a small head with an extremely close-cropped head of hair was poked in.

"Is Oxden here?" it asked; but the words were scarcely out of its mouth before there was a united yell from the whole of us of "Cox! come in and talk! Hang it, man! you're not going on," and a simultaneous dash was made at the intruding head by the four athletes, who collared the body belonging to it, and dragged the whole thing—though there was not the slightest need for such an ex-

hibition of force, as, in the first place, any one of them could have taken it up by the coat-collar with one finger, and, in the second, there was not the slightest symptom of resistance on its part—into the circle which we were occupying round the fire.

Picture a figure of a little over five feet with a small, good-looking face and extremely wiry limbs, and you have a general outline of our College cox. As for expression of countenance, there was a good deal of determination about it, at the same time that it gave one the idea that in spite of any resolution to effect an object, its owner would be the last person to be in too great a hurry about doing so. Many determined persons, too, have a somewhat disagreeable look, but cox's was not a look of this sort ; a pleasant smile usually lurked about the corners of his mouth, except when the exigencies of the circumstances might perhaps require all his command of expression to increase the determined aspect. Oh, he's a sly young customer, is that little cox of ours !

Cox is the Captain's right-hand man : they have sat opposite each other as stroke and cox ever since they came up, and though the captain has a secretary to assist him in his boat-work, yet I believe he values cox as an unofficial persuader of freshmen more than the secretary in his official capacity. Cox quite looks upon the boat as an enthusiastic huntsman looks upon his horse : he knows all the inns and outs, exactly how much rudder ought to be put on at what corners, when men are cocking or skying, or swinging out of or into the boat and causing it to roll, and all those other technicalities which are so mysterious to a landsman, and make him think that to be a good cox it must really be necessary to have been born in an eight. And then though in private life cox's voice is as gentle as a sucking dove's, when engaged in its public duties, it can be manipulated so as to produce a yell like that of a wild Indian ; and woe to the unfortunate who may have his oar into the water an instant sooner or later than the rest of his fellows ! Cox's eye is down upon him in an instant, and a warning against the repetition of the

offence is hurled from the stern of the boat like a thunderbolt from the hand of Jove !

Cox's business at this particular moment was concerning some unwary freshmen whom he had just beguiled into coming down to be tubbed, having talked them into believing that tubbing was the most delightful occupation that could be devised for a cold November afternoon under the sun, or rather under the little sun that was to be had through the fogs prevalent at that season. Oxden congratulated him on his success, as he knew the freshmen in question by sight, and from their size and build had spotted them as useful men, but had, as well as the secretary, been hitherto unsuccessful in inducing them to join the devoted band of tubbists. When this important affair had been disposed of, Milstead again set upon Oxden for his story ; it seemed, from what Milstead afterwards told me, that it was the only good long anecdote that Oxden could tell, and he had practised it so often, and could deliver it so well, that he thought it would be a pity to let the evening pass without getting it out of him.

"Well, it isn't much of a story," Oxden again protested, "but as you seem keen upon it, I don't mind." Milstead winked at me. He told me afterwards that by this wink he had meant to express that Oxden was a goodnatured fellow on the whole, and though he might seem to outsiders to be a stupidish sort of man, who could only eat and drink and sleep and row, yet he could be very sociable when he liked, and contribute his share towards the amusement of the company—indeed when at home, where Milstead knew something of him, he was quite a different sort of fellow altogether, and a great favourite among the ladies, capital dancer, &c., &c. A good deal to make a wink mean, I think—something like Lord Burleigh's nod.

Oxden filled his fifth pipe—when not in training, he smoked to excess—and began.

"It was last Lent, you know, when we had already gained two places on the first two nights, and the night before ought to have been a tremendous race. In fact, it had never been supposed

that we should make our bump; but one of their men caught a crab, and that lost them a length at the start, and then another broke his oar about the middle of the race, so we caught them in the Long Reach and went up: they were averagely riled, I believe, and had made up their minds to re-bump us on the third night—weren't they, cox?"

"I should think they were," said cox, when thus appealed to. "I heard some of them as I was walking up behind them from the boats, and heard them talking about it." One of cox's great propensities is to keep his ears open to catch stray matters about the river, and apply his information to what service he can towards the welfare of our boat.

"We were going to make a hard fight of it, however," Oxden went on. "The matter lay thus: we thought we could bump the boat that was now in front of us, but we weren't sure whether we could do it before the one behind caught us. Cox had been out reconnoitring, and he had got all the times of the different boats in the last course they had

rowed just before the races, and he had made out a sum by which he thought that we ought to get our bump just about a foot before the other one came up with us. I can't say I trusted very much in his mathematics—"

"I don't know why," interrupted cox. "I'm in for the Mathematical Tripos."

"Oh yes, I know ; going to be a wrangler, no doubt : just the very reason I shouldn't believe in you. Now if you had put yourself down for a junior optime, there might have been something in it, but I should have thought you had been long enough up here to know that no wrangler ever did any good when it came to practice—"

"I don't see that that has much to do with the story," said cox ; "go on."

"Well, as I said, we didn't—but I'll spare your feelings, cox—but we said that if we burst ourselves over it, we'd bump that boat in front, and send it down for the other boat to do what it liked with it the next night, but we wouldn't be bumped ourselves : we had made two bumps in two nights,

and after that to be rebumped would be too much : so we paddled down to our place, as you may suppose, in rather an excited state—”

“ You were excited yourself, you mean,” cox said ; “ other people weren’t.”

“ You weren’t, I know, you little beast ; you never are. I don’t think I ever saw anything so calm as the way you gave us the Easy as we passed Ditton going down, and took off your hat to the people on the bank, as if you thought the whole boat belonged to you. I was awfully angry with you, and if we hadn’t wanted you, I could have pitched you out of the boat—”

“ Thank you,” said cox. “ I wasn’t aware of your kind feelings towards me at the time.”

“ But I know all the rest of us were excited : however, we got to our place at last, and after waiting about a bit on the bank, got in again, and made ready to start—”

“ That must be rather a trying moment,” I hazarded.

“ Isn’t it ? You fellows that don’t row can’t tell

the sort of way one strains on one's oar, trying to reach an inch further forward than usual, so as to get off with the longest stroke at the beginning possible, and listening to the man on the bank with the watch, saying, "Five seconds, four, three two—"

"What's that for?" asked Hayling, who had never attended a race from the very start.

"Why, because the boats furthest from the starting-gun don't catch the sound at the instant it goes off, so they have to do this to get them off altogether: then comes the 'Go,' cox drops the chain, and off we row as hard as we can."

Here came the first real pause in his headlong account, the ashes of his pipe requiring to be prodded up to make it draw. "We started at forty to the minute, but from the first the boat behind seemed gaining on us, and by the time we got into the Gut it was almost within half its distance. I looked at cox then, but he was preparing to take Grassy: at that moment he put on a smile: it was an awful smile: I don't think I ever realized what

a demon must look like in boating things till I saw cox then—”

“Thank—you,” said cox again.

“If it hadn’t been that I saw it was meant as an inward smile, and not intended for me, I think I should have laughed: that is, if I could have found time for a laugh under the circumstances: but I didn’t, and I rowed on, I believe slightly increasing my stroke. The other men complained afterwards, but it was all for their good, so I didn’t mind—”

“It was something like forty-eight,” said cox.

“No, draw it mild; it wasn’t as much as that. Well, then we rounded Grassy splendidly: cox never steered better, I don’t think—”

“That’s either uncomplimentary, or it isn’t grammar,” this from cox.

“Bother grammar: I was saying cox never steered better, and that means a good deal: we shaved round Grassy with about four inches to spare; I almost thought we were into the bank altogether, but we cleared: we must have saved a good length there; didn’t we, cox?”

"About that, I should think," was the reply.

"Is it so very difficult to steer round Grassy, then?" asked Spright.

"Did you ever try to take a long ladder at full speed round a right angle?" asked Oxden in return.

"Never."

"Then try it," was the disdainful rejoinder. Spright shut up.

"Cox's smile got more demoniacal than ever; but there seemed a good deal of delight in it, and I thought he probably had some good reason for it—he told me afterwards it was because the boat in front had gone right round the outside bank, and he knew that would make the difference we wanted; however, the boat behind took a very good Grassy too, and was still gaining on us. We passed two boats lying under the bank, one of which must have bumped the other. I knew there were only five boats in the division above us, and if the bumping boat was the one we had to catch, I thought it was all up with us: our only chance lay in our bumping, for at the present rate

we could never get to the end before we were caught—”

“Couldn’t you see by the colours what boats they were?” asked Hayling again.

“Bless you, no! Do you suppose when we’re rowing we have any time to look at things on the bank? I only caught a side glimpse out of the corner of my eye, and we were going such a pace that we were round Ditton corner before I could have had time to distinguish them even if I had wanted to—but we rowed on: and the boat behind came closer and closer. I looked at cox, and sort of grunted, ‘Look out!’ which made him glance back for a moment; but in the next he was again gazing earnestly forward, and stretching his neck as if to see over our heads at something on ahead—”

“Couldn’t you hear anything from the bank?” I asked. “I’m sure there’s always row enough.”

“Not to distinguish; we haven’t any time except for what our own coach says; and we knew *his*

voice, you know. The boat behind was almost into us, and cox turned and looked back—oh, so calmly! then he said, ‘Can you quicken?’ I nodded: he yelled out, ‘Quicken up!’ and on we went with an addition of about five strokes, at least so it seemed to me, a minute—”

“That makes fifty-three,” said Oxden’s friend.

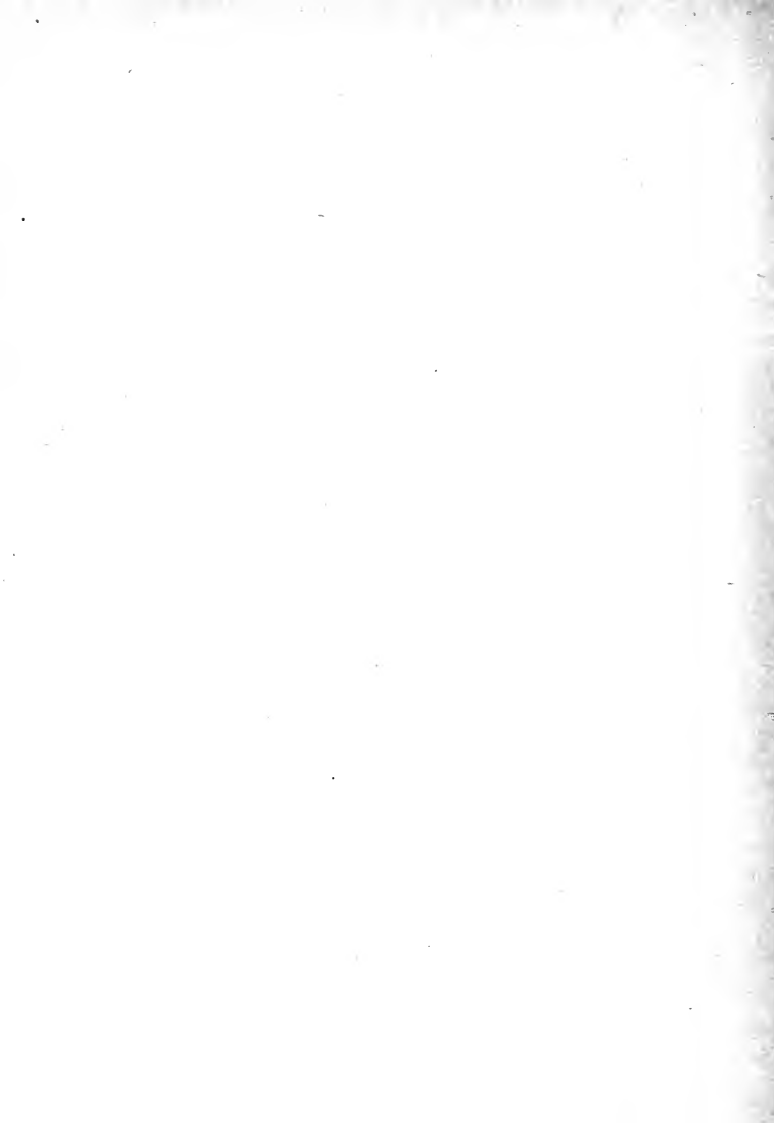
“Oh well, it couldn’t have been as much as that, but we got a tremendous way on the boat; cox gave another stretch of his neck forward, and then condescended to devote some attention to affairs behind; just as the nose of the boat there seemed touching our stern, he pulled his right string hard during a stroke, and sent a wave up about the size of the Severn bore, which completely threw them back for a couple of feet; then he let his rudder straight again, and yelled, ‘Keep it up!’ Two strokes more, and he pulled his right string again; a tremendous wash came down the side of our boat, and he ground his teeth, but in another two strokes there was a slight shock in the bows; ‘Easy, mind your oars!’ shouted cox; and the

next minute we were under the bank with the boat behind racing past us. 'What the dickens are you up to?' I asked. 'Made a bump,' said cox, as calm as he is sitting there. And so we had. Four fainted after it; but it was a very near thing."

"Then what was the wash that came down just before the bump?" asked Hayling.

"Why of course that was the cox of the other boat trying to keep us off. But it was a rare near thing," he repeated.

Then we looked at our watches, and found there would only just be time for the visitors to get back to their own colleges—and went to bed.



VII.

SPRIGHT'S INIQUITIES.

IT grieves me to have to record it of one so dear to me,—perhaps some people may object, why then record it at all?—but a stern sense of duty compels me not to pass over the faults of my friends, when I feel that by holding them up as examples I may be conferring some benefit on my fellow-creatures,—it grieves me, then, to record it, but Spright, the stolid, imperturbable Spright, who always prided himself on his indifference to all the petty things that agitate the ordinary human breast, has suddenly developed a decided character for pot-hunting.

What is pot-hunting? perchance some curious reader may ask. Pot-hunting, my dear sir, is a

reprehensible degeneration of the human mind, which causes it to regard everything which it undertakes from a mercenary point of view. There may be pot-hunting in an intellectual manner, when the owner of a great mind devotes his energies to the amassment of scholarships and exhibitions, finishing up his career with a fellowship, but all the while regardless of the general advantages of learning, and only occupying himself in the getting up of tips or formulæ which may pay; and there may be pot-hunting in a physical manner, when some giant may be seen attending all the Strangers' Races, and petty athletic events of his college or of the university, with a view to furnishing his room with pewter and silver cups as records of his powers, not caring to utilize his forces in the cricket eleven or the boat that represents his college, unless he is certain that he may have something substantial to show for his trouble.

These, then, are the two branches of pot-hunting, and up to the last fortnight or so, no one was so

vehement in his denunciations of the practice as Spright, but since then events have happened which have completely demoralized him, and unless steps are immediately taken by the rest of his afflicted friends on the staircase, he will, in no very long period of time, have sunk into the pitiful state of a confirmed pot-hunter. And shall I be credited when I state that he has not exhibited this tendency in the scholarship or exhibition line, but purely in the athletic way? Yes, Spright, who cannot come up to my rooms without arriving at the top of the stairs in a state of absolute breathlessness from the exertion, has become keen in the pursuit of honour on flood and field—at least, so far as talking goes—his sole end and object being to be one day able to lunch a party of sixteen, and regale them all with beer, each out of a separate pewter mug, which he shall have gained as an evidence of his triumphs of muscle and endurance.

Scarce fourteen revolving suns have sunk beneath the Cambridge horizon—at least we may

take it for granted that they have done so, as I suppose they were there, though we didn't see them—since we were sitting one evening at tea in Spright's rooms, when Oxden, the Captain of the Boat Club, appeared, holding a paper in his hand, and asked us if we would care to enter for the College Scratch Fours.

I remember then the following remarkable conversation took place between him and Spright:—

“Any subscription?” asked the latter.

“Yes, of course there is, or there wouldn't be any fun in the thing. But it's only half-a-crown. Come, you may as well go in. Shall I put you down?”

“Oh, that's all very well,” said Spright. “It's very good fun for you rowing men, who always win, while we, who aren't so used to the river, pay your expenses. I don't at all approve of these *miserable pot-hunting dodges* of yours. We pay our money, and then three weeks or so afterwards we come into your rooms and see a great pot stuck up on a shelf, and you say, when you think

we must be wondering what it is for, though of course we really don't care a rap about it, 'Oh, yes ; that's what I got for the Scratch Fours,' and we are supposed to derive some sort of satisfaction from it. I don't think you deserve any encouragement."

"Nonsense, old fellow, you've got just as much chance as any one else. You may be drawn in a four with three first-boatmen, or you may cox if you like, and then you haven't got to do anything but sit still."

"Well, I'll put down my name if I may cox ; but if you put me down to row, I promise you I'll scratch."

"All right," and down went Spright's name, he quite forgetting the fact that no money would be returned, even if he did scratch. Once insert your tribute into the rapacious maw of the Boat Club, and you may make sure that you will never see *it* again. Down, too, went all our names, and we heard no more about the matter for two or three days afterwards.

Then there came round a notice in Hall, "Scratch Fours will be rowed to-morrow morning at half-past eleven, sharp," and we knew that if we got down to the river at a quarter-past twelve, we might not have to wait more than three quarters of an hour, if we were in luck : and next morning Oxden came into Spright's rooms where I was breakfasting, and asked us if we would like to come and see the crews drawn.

"Rather so," said Spright; "just to make sure it's all right, you know."

Oxden looked at him, not as if he would have liked to have hit him, or kicked him, or perpetrated a severe personal assault of some sort on him, as I am sure I should have done, if I had been in his place, but compassionately, and said,—

"What an unbelieving Jew you are, Spright! Well, come and see for yourself, and you'll be astonished how the names do sometimes come out."

We went to see for ourselves. There were several other men, boating and non-boating, in

Oxden's rooms, and the names, neatly doubled up on small slips of paper, lay in a cap on the middle of the table, so that there could be no risk through a lack of publicity in the proceedings. Oxden dragged Spright playfully in by the ear through the assemblage, and told him he might draw for himself; and when the results had been all made known, I must say I *was* astonished. Spright drew a crew for himself of four men out of the first boat: the only thing that seemed to lessen his chances of a certain victory was that they were all used to rowing on the bow side in the eight, and of course that would be impracticable in a four. Nevertheless, the betting, such as it was, was very heavy on that boat. I asked Spright in an aside, if he wasn't going to move for a second draw, just to make sure, but he seemed to have abated his former professions of incredulity, and only told me to shut up, and he could see now it was all fair; and he indeed very nearly went so far as to acknowledge that he thought he had been a fool to say as much as he had before he

had had any experience in the matter of scratch fours.

The next hottest four was the one in which Oxden was, and which, besides him and Milstead, had the great advantage of comprising myself. There were three other boats in, between two of which the rest of the first boat were divided, while the third was of quite *the* typical scratch description, consisting of Hayling, an eminent bicyclist, whose only recommendation seemed to be that constant practice on his favourite instrument might enable him to keep his balance in a narrow boat, and two reading men, for whom it would be difficult to assign any reason for their entering at all, unless it was for purely goodnatured motives, to make up a reasonable number of boats, under the bland persuasions of the ever-energetic college cox.

The cox of this last-mentioned boat, too, was quite in keeping—or perhaps it would be more correct to say out of keeping—with the rest of the crew. He was a man of something like six foot five

in height, and so thin that he always looked as if he ought to be trained up on a stick like a creeper. His great recommendation to public notice had hitherto always been the great effectiveness with which he could render the last popular comic song. The college cox steered another boat, and ours and the fifth were managed—so far as they could be said to be managed at all—by two moderately-sized men, averaging ten stone or so, of ordinary capacity.

In strict accordance with all Cambridge notions of punctuality, we began to change at a quarter-past eleven; it only takes a little over half an hour to get down to the Long Reach, the part of the river where it is customary for scratch fours to be rowed. None of us ever having had any occasion to purchase any boating clothes, we were unable to raise a complete aquatic uniform on the whole of the staircase; and when we were finally equipped, and set off in a body down to the starting-post, in spite of our endeavours to look as much as possible like habitual frequenters of the river and its surroundings, I must admit that we signally failed.

Only those who are acquainted with the vast variety of blazers (that is flannel coats of different hues adopted respectively by the thousand and one clubs that obtain at Cambridge—the first duty on the part of a newly-formed club being to invent something entirely original, and if possible something more startling than any that have preceded it—this for the information of the inquiring outsider)—only those, I say, will appreciate the force of my remark, when I mention that our general appearance as we walked across Midsummer Common arm-in-arm was such as to create an impression in the mind of a casual observer that we were in the pay of some more enterprising haberdasher, and employed by way of perambulating advertisements of the large assortment of goods that he was at any moment prepared to supply to any customer who might be attracted to his shop thereby. Milstead wore a Fenner's blazer, which for ugliness, I should say, is one that has rarely been equalled, and has certainly never been surpassed; Spright wore a Blue-

bottle blazer—the Bluebottles are a lawn tennis club, of which, after long perseverance in badgering such connexions as he had that were already in it, he has at last got elected as an honorary, I should say a very honorary, member ;—I had a college cricket club blazer which I obtained the inestimable privilege of wearing by a modest fee of a sovereign down, and ten shillings to come in all subsequent years while I remain an under-graduate ; and Hayling appeared in the uniform of the Soubise Club, a lunching club, of which he was one of the principal promoters, for the purpose of enabling its members to solace themselves once or twice a week on something more suitable to a delicate palate than those more vulgar compounds which the college kitchen is accustomed to provide. I have hinted that even to the casual and inexperienced observer we had but small chance of passing ourselves off as regular boating men. University men who saw us, being well versed in the symptoms that we betrayed by our appearance at this early hour, and in that costume, and at that

particular period of the term, merely muttering to themselves pityingly, "Scratch Fours," and passed by on the other side.

It was on this our journey down that Spright first began to show symptoms of the disorder under which he is now labouring: he was so confident in the powers of the crew he had drawn, that he even began to speculate as to the size of the pewter he was going to win, and whereabouts he should put it in his rooms when he had got it, whether it would look best on his mantel-piece or over his sideboard, or whether he should have a special bracket made from a design of his own with the College arms intertwined with "4's" embossed all over it, to hold the trophy—till at last we couldn't stand it any longer. Milstead, taking upon himself to represent the palpable feelings of the rest, suggested that he hadn't got it yet, and though he might have ever so good a crew, he must always consider the disadvantages of a cox who weighed something over ten stone, and had never steered in a light boat before. Then Spright shut up.

Although we had made our calculations so as not to be kept waiting when we arrived at the river, a proceeding which we did not at all appreciate,—of course it was a matter of small moment how long the other people had to wait for us,—it so happened that everybody else seemed to have acted on the same principle, and, what was worse, to have arranged their movements with great nicety, so that in the end we were the first to appear on the scene of the contest. Twenty minutes had we to dawdle about on the bank of the Long Reach. Only those who know what a stiff north-easterly wind on the Long Reach is can realize what a pleasurable experience of life such a process is, and how greatly one's feelings of enjoyment are enhanced by the fact of one's only having on flannel garments of the lightest description, and being conscious of all one's vital energies gradually being congealed out of one's fingers and toes. There is no beautiful view to beguile the time with ; nothing but wide fields extending themselves, seemingly as flatly as they can to oblige

the said north-easter; and we didn't dare take any very extensive run to keep up our circulation, because we didn't know that the rest of the men mightn't turn up at any time during our absence. The Long Reach may be picturesque enough to a visitor, who has never seen it but when rendered gay by the massing of colours, boating and otherwise, intermingled with the natural beauties of the fairer sex, and enlivened with the flash of many oars, and the general excitement of the bumping-races; but it requires twenty minutes of waiting for scratch fours to come off to enable one to understand what it is in all its solitary grandeur. At last Oxden and a select party of boating men turned up. They had come down in a fleet of funnies and pair-oared gigs from the boat-house, and were tolerably warm from their exertions; and then I may state, if you please, that they had the audacity to complain that the rest of our men had not yet come. Ten minutes afterwards, however, these arrived, and the heats were immediately drawn.

The fours had been sent on beforehand, and had been lying all this time drawn up under the bank in the nominal charge of an old and obese boatman, who now, on being hailed in the vociferous style that only real boating men seem to be able to manage properly, emerged from a cottage somewhere in the back of the scene, where he had retired out of the cold to fill up the interval, and at the same time himself, with something to keep out the cold.

There were only two boats available, so that the system of heats that we had to adopt was this : first two crews rowed from the railway bridge to Ditton, in the direction that the Cam is popularly supposed to flow—it does not necessarily do so by any means : on this particular day, for instance, the wind had slightly inclined the current, if anything, rather the opposite way ;—then these two crews were to get out, and two other crews, having run down the bank with the first heat, were to take their places, and row back to the railway bridge ; and then the fifth crew, that had drawn a bye, was

to row over the course, if it could, down to Ditton again. This made up the first set of heats. Then the second set was to be drawn : the crew that had drawn the bye was to row against one of the winning crews in the first heats back to the bridge again ; the bye was to be rowed over down to Ditton ; and the final between the winning crew of the second set and the bye was to be up to the bridge again. It was a very elaborate arrangement ; the best of it was that it gave the non-rowers such a lot of running about.

A start was made precisely at twenty-seven and a half minutes past twelve—I don't know indeed why I should say "precisely" in this forcible manner, as, when one comes to think of it, the start must have been made at some particular moment of the day or night, if at all—but I am writing the account of a boat-race, and I believe it is the custom in such accounts to begin in this way. The first heat was drawn between our boat and the college cox's. Spright, who seemed to have become particularly obtrusive this morning, pushed himself forward

into the way of the starter—one of the men in his boat acting in that capacity temporarily for Oxden—and made himself very troublesome by his officiousness in trying to ensure the rival boats a fair start. Scratch fours, I may notice in passing, are rowed as breast races, there being room for two boats to proceed alongside, should occasion require them to do so, in the Long Reach without any serious risk of colliding ; that is, if the coxes know anything at all about their business. I presume, not knowing much myself about the technicalities of the Cam, that a line drawn straight across the river from the starter's eye forms an acute angle on his right hand with the other bank, the direction of the course being to his left. At any rate, Spright was unceremoniously thrust aside in the middle of a protest that the noses of the boats were not straight ; and when our two's oar was somewhere about level with three's in the other boat, the word was given, and after a preliminary splash, and a tolerably successful attempt at a crab on my part, we set to work to row—at least, I

believe the other men rowed, as the boat did go along to a certain extent—I merely dipped my oar in in time with the others, and then let it row through the rest of the stroke by itself. This heat was really the most exciting race of the day. The other boat began by leading, and, thanks to the excellent steering of their cox, maintained their advantage for the first twenty yards or so. We yawed a good deal at the start, and owing to our cox losing his head and unfortunately pulling the wrong string became entangled with the bank for a minute or so. However, we got off at last, and by dint of punting got out into mid-stream again; and then, Oxden having given our cox strict injunctions on no account to meddle with the strings beyond taking them out of the water, superior weight and skill told, and we soon overhauled our adversaries, and won in the end by about five lengths.

Then the crews for the next heat took their places. This was between Spright's crew and the other one which had two of the remaining first boat

oars in it. It was a more exciting race than might have been expected. Spright's boat took the lead at first; but his stroke and two, not being used to row on that side of the boat, were perpetually catching crabs—I counted fifteen of them from first to last—which contributed considerably to the equalization of forces. In the other boat only the two first boatmen rowed at all; the other men, when they had made two or three attempts at starting, and had only succeeded in jerking their oars out of their row-locks at every stroke, calmly pulled them in, and sat throughout the rest of the race as spectators, regardless of the shouts of the infuriated crowd running on the bank—it consisted of seventeen individuals in all—that they should jump overboard and swim ashore. The time of that heat, I believe, was not good.

The bye was then rowed over by Hayling's crew. The long cox coiled himself somehow into his place, and the four was shoved out into the middle of the stream, and left to its fate. It gave

a violent lurch, only just recovering itself as its gunwale reached the top of the water, and then proceeded at a funeral pace down the Long Reach. Five of us took the other boat down for the next heat, and the others sauntered down the bank alongside the boat that was now competing. The crew adopted the windmill system of rowing, together with a method of maintaining as many individual times as there were oars in the boat; and they rolled a good deal, possibly on account of their peculiar style, though, of course, not being a rowing man myself, I am open to correction. They arrived in course of time at the finish, and we met them on the bank and congratulated them on their safe return to dry land.

But it was not for long. They soon had to go down again to the deep, to row in the second set of heats, in which fate—represented by Oxden's tossing halfpenny—had decreed that they should be matched against Spright's crew. Now this latter had been the crew that had elected to row the vacant boat down, and consequently had taken

a mean advantage of their opponents to get well together. The race that followed was no race. Spright, indeed, took his boat a very wobbly course up the Reach, so that if the other four had come anywhere near enough to touch him, they would have been quite justified in claiming a foul. But all chances of their doing so were obviated by the circumstance of their turning completely over at the first start, and having to make their way to shore as best they could. The four rowers swam to shore, and emerged very wet and water-stained, but otherwise not so dirty as they might have been. The lengthy cox was left hanging to the bottom of the boat with a face as white, or perhaps I should say considerably whiter, than his flannels.

"Can you swim?" shouted Oxden to him, evidently determined not to plunge manfully into the icy stream and rescue him at the peril of his own life, except as a very last resource.

"No," said the perishing man despairingly: but then his face brightened as a sudden happy thought struck him—"but I can walk!"

And putting down his vast extent of leg, he quietly waded ashore, and landed in an awful state, bringing the greater part of the sedimentary deposit of the Cam with him. Then we ran on, so as to be in time to meet the other four at the winning-post, and row our bye back again.

While we were doing this, the water-logged vessel had been turned right side up and drained. Spright declared that nothing would induce him to risk his life by sitting in a damp boat and catching cold ; and as we were not a bit more anxious to do so than he was, we tossed up for the dry one. We won, and so Spright had to polish up his seat as best he could with his own pocket-handkerchief and any others that he could borrow from anybody who felt disposed to lend them and when he had settled matters to his own satisfaction, and further wheedled Oxden out of his scarf to sit upon, so as to ensure against rheumatism, we again got ready to row the final.

We got well ahead at first ; then I got excited,

and tried to row. Naturally we were somewhat delayed, and Spright's boat drew up. Still, we were half a length to the good, and now we were within thirty yards of the winning-post. Then our cox ran us right across the river. Bump came Spright's bow into our side. There was a splashing and a flashing of oars, shouts from the bank—our boat became violently agitated ; I cried,—

“A fou—!”

But before I could complete the word, the waters closed over my head. I remained under for some time—ten minutes it seemed to me at the time, though I daresay it wasn't really so long—to avoid getting knocked on the head in the scrimmage ; and when I reappeared to the public gaze, I found the rest of our men the best part of the way to the bank, and Spright's boat still reeling from the shock, but triumphantly pursuing its way to the winning-post.

There was much disputing as to the rights of the foul. Some said it was our fault, some said it was the others' fault, and some again said that it

was both parties' fault, as the collision occurring in the very middle of the river, neither could accuse the other of being on the wrong side. It was suggested that the race should be rowed again ; but our chief desire being to get home as quickly as possible and change our things, which were already beginning to show symptoms of freezing, we conceded the victory to our adversaries, and all adjourned home.

Spright had the impudence to ask the whole party to lunch, and the majority of us went. There were not enough plates and knives and forks for the whole party, nor chairs to seat them, so we had to feed in a primitive fashion off the dishes, and to squat about on the floor or the window-sills. Then at the end Spright got up and made a speech, which he concluded by proposing the health of "The Winning Four."

And now he has got his pewter, and has stuck it up ostentatiously on a shelf, for people to talk about and congratulate him on it. He has taken to date everything from the period of his winning

that pot, "Three weeks before the Scratch Fours, you know," or "Two days after the Scratch Fours, that was:" and now that he has at last begun to perceive that the subject is become a little trite, he is thinking by what similarly easy method he can win another. He has just shouted to me from downstairs to know if I will enter for a lawn-tennis tournament that he wants to get up. I answered, "Certainly not," and threw a book—one of his own by the way—at him, to teach him not to bother me when I am working. I had sported, and shouldn't have opened my door if I had known he was going to waste my time about such a trivial matter: I thought he was at least going to ask me to lunch. If he doesn't reform very speedily, I shall have to cut him.



VIII.

ABOUT SEVERAL THINGS, PARTICULARLY
LODGINGS.

WE have just been having a great sensation on our staircase. Hayling has been very ill ; he is now recovering rapidly, and will soon be restored to the anxious circle of friends and acquaintances in which he habitually moves. Not that I mean to say that he has ever been actually out of it : during the period that his malady has been lasting, he has been a centre of it, and I believe, though it is a long time since I got through my little-go, and I am getting very shaky in my Euclid, that the centre is usually counted as part of the circle : what I ought strictly to have said, perhaps, was that he will be soon taking his place in the circum-

ference again, and be going round and round like the rest of the circle.

Nobody need be alarmed when they hear that Hayling has been very ill, and that, nevertheless, he has been still the centre of the circle ; his ailment was serious, perhaps, for himself, but there was nothing dangerous about it for other people ; it wasn't catching : at least, I believe not ; he had only broken his leg. In a fit of over-generosity he volunteered his services in a football-match, the usual college-team mustering short that day, chiefly owing, I believe, to a general impression that had arisen amongst its members that there would be several breakages likely to ensue, in consequence of the severe frost that had just hardened the ground to the consistency of cast-iron, and the natural result was that, though such breakages did not fall to the luck of any of the more habitual players, who did happen to be out, Hayling, who, to my knowledge, has not so disported himself above twice or three times ever since he has been up, just happened to come in for the only one

that occurred in the whole of the university that day, which I, for one, am inclined to regard in the light of a warning. Spright and I, by the way, have been condoling with Hayling on his misfortune, and Hayling was beginning to look upon it for himself in something of the same light, till we suggested it to him as our idea, and then he got angry, and wanted to throw medicine-bottles, which were the only things within his reach at the moment, at us.

However, this is only intended as preliminary to a discourse which I have been preparing for some time on the respective merits of college of lodgings. It is a question that is very often asked—at least, I have been very often asked it by anxious parents, who are intending to send their sons to the university, and of course are desirous of doing the best for them that they can, and I don't suppose I am specially favoured by them as a possible source of all information, useful or otherwise, more than any one else whom they may think they will be likely to get something out of—well, then, I

think I shall not be far wrong in stating it so broadly, it is a question that is very often asked: Is it better to be in college or in lodgings? Now there can be but one safe answer to this extremely intricate question; it is one that has had to be used to satisfy the demands of inquirers on so many other subjects; and that is, It entirely depends.

The chances are that if you canvass the opinion of the university on the subject, you will find all those who are in lodgings declare that there can be no life equal to one out of college, and all those who are located in college will be ready to maintain that if you are in quest of the Ideal, or anything of that sort, you can only get as near an approach to the article as possible by going into college; and it does not seem to matter much if you ask any one who has tried both, and who, you might have supposed, would have been capable of giving you a fair and unbiassed opinion; you will always find him prejudiced in favour of that state of life in which he is existing at that particular moment,

and nothing but a change to the other will be likely to free him from his prejudice.

I am afraid I am not entirely guiltless of this myself. I daresay that lodgings are very comfortable, and that I should be very well content to live in them if fate required me to do so ; but as it is, I am in college, and there I intend to remain till I go down, or at any rate till I am turned out by the authorities. But I was thinking more of the case of a man I met this afternoon in Hayling's rooms, called Holtmore, who keeps out of college, and though he spends a good deal of his time within the precincts, yet can never be induced to perceive what are the immense advantages to be derived from taking up a permanent abode there. It is in vain that we paint him highly-coloured pictures of the evenings we can have after the gates are closed, when, if he does not contrive to get inside before ten, he is debarred by the college regulations from joining us, and has to sit outside—metaphorically of course, because he would be of rather remarkable tastes if he were to do it

literally in this sort of weather—weeping like the Peri outside Paradise ; he only retaliates by saying that he doesn't want to come in, which isn't true, as he is usually to be found in some one's rooms till the last available moment before twelve, when he must go, whether he likes it or not, four nights out of the six. Well then, he says, at any rate he very often doesn't want to be in, and that if he wants to work he can do it in lodgings quietly, and safe from all interruptions after that same hour of ten, because no one is allowed to get at him ; as if it wasn't absurd to suppose we need be interrupted at our work, if we only sport our doors, and refuse to open, even if we know it is our dearest friend outside with something we particularly want to know, but pretend not to hear, or to be asleep. Then we confront him with the argument that he has to live entirely for himself, and unless he is very thick with his fellow-lodgers, which isn't always the case, he cannot borrow their things in the same liberal manner that we can ; he replies by throwing our want of bell in our face, and our

being what he chooses to call at the mercy of our gyps and bedmakers, and tries to confirm the superiority of his position by detailing to us the joys of being able to ring for his slavey whenever he wants hot water, or to send out for anything at any hour ; and so we sometimes go on for a whole evening, but neither side ever seems to convince the other.

However, there is one thing he has just been put up to by Hayling's illness in favour of his views, and I think on consideration that there is something, or even a good deal, in what he says, and that is, that if you intend to go in for being ill up here, it is perhaps better to go into lodgings than into college. We had hitherto been comparatively lucky on our staircase, and, indeed, I hardly count Hayling's as a fair case : his has been more his misfortune than his fault : and what I was thinking about the loneliness of being ill in college does not apply, as, of course, there being no infection, it only made a pleasing variety in our lives to be charitable, and go and have

tea with him, and tell him the news, and all that sort of thing : even Spright managed to get upstairs to do that : indeed, he has been up there the greater part of the time since the catastrophe happened : some people say that it is a good deal because he doesn't care to go up more than he can help, and so he doesn't come down much ; but what I meant was, that if you mean to go in for a steady course of infectious diseases, so that no one can be constantly dropping in on you to see what you want, then by all means go into lodgings, and have your bell, and send your slavey for what you like, and anything besides you wish for and can get by paying menials for it.

Holtmore certainly can speak with some authority on this subject. He has had the measles and the hooping-cough since he has been up, and though I and Spright did go in and see him once or twice, simply because we had done with all these infantile ailments a long time ago, and we thought there could be no possible danger in doing so, until we once ran against the doctor there, and he sug-

gested mildly that we might communicate them to somebody else ; still, I remember it struck us at the time, that, given everything as it ought to be, that is, everybody avoiding Holtmore like a pestilence, and Holtmore in college, he would have been very uncomfortable. Perhaps there is something in what he says about the bedmaker and the gyp, and our being at their mercy, when it comes to a case of illness : we don't miss them so much when we are well, and we suit ourselves a good deal to their hours : but if one is seedy, one is constantly remembering something one wants, and forgot the last time the servant was in the room—one finds that at home, and then, of course, if it were in college, one wouldn't be able to ring the bell, and have him or her back again, as one can do at home. And, perhaps, even if you do have your friends constantly coming in, as Hayling does, you may in time have compunctions about working them too hard—not but what we are always very glad to do anything for Hayling—but if you have people about you whom you are paying for what

they do, you don't feel it so much, though of course you feel very grateful to them too, yet, somehow or other, it does seem to be a rather different sort of gratitude.

But this appears to me to be rather verging on metaphysics, and the paper altogether is taking rather a hypochondriacal tendency, so perhaps I had better change the subject before I get deep into matters I don't understand too much about. I will dismiss Hayling with an assurance to my readers that, though he is in college and ill, he is receiving all the care and nursing that his sympathizing friends can give him, not to speak of advice unlimited, which, however, he does not always follow; perhaps, on the whole, it is as well for him that he doesn't. Spright makes his tea, and brews toast-and-water for him, and tucks him in with Milstead's assistance the last thing at night: Westbury has made going out on messages for him his new form of exercise by way of variation on his usual grind round by Trumpington, &c., &c., and *vice versa*; and I—well, I'm general factotum under Spright,

and sit up there smoking and talking, and waiting till something for me to do turns up. Milstead, the last few days, has been carrying the invalid about, since he has been able to move a little on to the sofa. And when we have to go at night, Hayling says he isn't lonely; he has seventeen cats who come and sing to him through his window. See what a thing it is to be kind to dumb animals; he took a poor cat in once, that was mewling outside on the leads on a cold winter's night, and now it has brought sixteen others to keep him company through the weary hours of night. And there let us leave him; I want to say what is my experience of lodgings.

Of course I can only state what I know from a purely second-hand point of view, because, as I remarked before, I never was in lodgings up at the university myself, though I have had sundry adventures of a more or less blood-curdling description while residing in that species of abode elsewhere; these, however, are to be published separately some time in the distant future, when I

have taken my degree and been called to the bar, and made my fortune ; when I shall have earned some leisure, and have some spare time to write my memoirs : they would be irrelevant to my present purposes besides. Well, as I was going to say, only my thoughts carried me away—that's the cause of these stylographic and other sorts of reservoir pens ; they do carry you away so, or rather, I should say, they keep up with your thoughts so, instead of serving as a drag on them when they get too vivacious, as the sober old three-words-to-a-dip pens used to do—well, here it is at last. I think that of all my acquaintances in lodgings, I cannot do better than select the above-mentioned Holtmore as an excellent type of the lodger : for diligence in the way of experiments I should say that he has been rarely equalled and certainly never excelled ; he has been up six terms now, and I am not sure whether it is five or seven lodgings he has tried in that time : I know it is either one more or one less than the number of terms ; I am inclined to think it is one more.

Holtmore tells me that there are landladies and landladies, by which he means to express that some landladies devote their whole time and labour to the welfare of their lodgers, very often, he says, carrying the idea to an excess, and never leaving him alone, but appearing at short intervals in his room all through the day, "just to see if the fire is in," or something of that sort, or, what he says is the worst form this mania takes, to impart a few words of grandmotherly advice, "just as if I wasn't able to look after my own fire or morals for myself without an old woman always bothering about like that," he remarked once: however, he doesn't mind this so very much, and he says he is always most comfortable in these lodgings; the only drawback is that they are so seldom to be found within a respectable distance of college; if you come up nearer into the town, you fall into the clutches of the second variety of landladies, who, knowing how much you are in their power—for though you may give them warning any day you like, it doesn't matter in the least to them, as they

could get ten applicants for their vacant rooms next day—charge enormously, and don't condescend to wait upon you themselves, but have a slavey, or perhaps two, who, being nothing but a decayed species of bedmaker's help, work all manner of havoc amongst your glass and crockery, besides distinguishing themselves by a voracity that I am sure not even a help could emulate. I remember once lunching with Holtmore when he had come more into the vicinity of college; we had had some cutlets, and Holtmore rang for the slavey to take away the ones we had left; going downstairs with them she met a man who had run in casually to lunch; Holtmore put his head over the banisters, and called to the slavey to bring up the cutlets again—there were four left, I think. The slavey hadn't yet got to the bottom, but there were no cutlets on the dish. She was taken red-handed, or, perhaps I should say, face-be-smeared: I think that was the only occasion I have ever heard a slavey or a help not ready with a plausible excuse; but she couldn't very well have

attempted one here, and she actually confessed that she had eaten the cutlets.

It may strike some, Then why doesn't Holtmore come into college, if the good landladies are too remote, and the less remote landladies are bad? The only solution I can think of to this problem is that Holtmore is naturally so proud—I should call it obstinacy myself, but I fancy I have heard him speak of it himself as pride—and is determined not to be baffled in his search after Perfection. And just at present it seems very much as if he had at last attained his object; at least, it is now past the middle of term, the period at which it is necessary to give notice of quitting to landladies under penalty of having to pay rent for, at any rate, half the next term, whether you lodge in the house or not, it being a singular fact at Cambridge, that if you just happen to postpone this giving notice for even only a week, your landlady will give you to understand that there has been a general run of the greater part of the university upon your rooms, and that you will be expected

to make good any loss that she may have incurred through your negligence. Well, that period is now well past, and Holtmore has not, as usual, announced his intention of going on to a better place, as has usually been his custom hitherto ; so I conclude he is tolerably well satisfied.

Holtmore's present rooms are not so far from college, but they have not a very beautiful look-out, and I suppose that that being a reason why a good many of the more fastidious seekers after lodgings do not care about taking them, the landlady is an exception to the rule I mentioned above, and is glad to get any one who will take them, and keep them, and tries to make him as comfortable as possible without running to motherliness, that tendency being counteracted by the fact that she has other rooms in her house which look out over the fashionable thoroughfare of King's Parade, and are inhabited by men who are of a strictly unfilial-towards-landlady type, and though they like their situation too well to turn out of their rooms, would not tolerate what they would probably term "too

much jaw," and have most likely tamed her into submission to their dreadful ways by a reckless violation of her tenderer feelings with regard to the immoral practices of habitual evening whist-parties, and regular matinées of proctors' bulldogs. Perhaps Holtmore is so good and quiet in comparison with his fellow-lodgers, that she thinks he has no need of her exhortations ; from what I have seen of her, she seems, indeed, rather to reverence him than otherwise.

I have said Holtmore's rooms have not a very good look-out : they are very high up, not quite in the roof, but next thing to it, and they command a view of the neighbouring chimney-pots, which view would, no doubt, extend away ever so far over the surrounding flat country round Cambridge if it were not for the Guildhall, which elevates itself in the midst at the distance of about one hundred yards. Still, there is plenty of air, except when the wind drives the smoke right into the window, and then Holtmore says he gets interesting whiffs of what his otherwise unknown neighbours are going

to have for dinner. His rooms are rather more comfortable than most in lodging-houses, that is to say, they are more cosy. His keeping-room is nothing but a collection of recesses with scarcely a middle to it at all, so that you can go in and wander about, looking for the owner ever so long before you can be sure whether he is in there at all, and his bed-room is next to it with a door in between, which is a great advantage not often to be got in rooms out of college: generally the keeping-room is down at the bottom of the house, and the bed-room right up at the top, so that it never gets warm, and it requires a tremendous effort to get to bed in the evening, and an equally Herculean one to get out of bed in the morning, when one doesn't feel that one can run through to the keeping-room after one's tub, and dry and dress by the fire.

Holtmore's rooms are also, perhaps, rather better than most lodgings, in that he has all his own furniture in them, instead of the usual horse-hair arrangements that one finds in lodgings to sit

on, or rather to sit off, for I know I could never remain comfortably on them, as they always have a decided list forward that lets you down very gradually like a glacier, without planting my feet firmly on the floor, and holding on as if I was sitting on the back seat of a high dog-cart. And then, in most lodgings, you will find that the whole of the rest of the furniture consists of a cottage piano of the largest size, which, if you are not a performer, and don't care to pay large sums in order that your friends may come in and fool about on it with one finger, is kept carefully locked, and is generally used as a sideboard, getting considerably scratched—the charge for each scratch averaging, according to Holtmore's experiences, three-and-sixpence—and a square table, with what are, I believe, commonly known on the stage as trick-flaps—that is, they have a way of suddenly collapsing when any heavy weight, such as a visitor, or even one of an ordinary kind, such as a pile of college plates, is put on them, and always with one leg shorter than the other, which keeps

you constantly occupied in the manufacture of paper or wooden wedges, which the landlady or the slavey, as the case may be, as constantly removes with the greatest care every morning. Holtmore is as domestic as a man can be, who is periodically on the move as he is, and he likes to make his existing sojourning-place as much like home as possible ; so he has bought his own furniture, and wherever he goes he exiles the lodging-house *lares* and *penates*, even down to the glass shade with the artificial flowers, and the candlesticks with wiggly-waggly crystal things hanging from them—which I forgot to mention as the inevitable mantelpiece ornaments in a lodging-house—to the higher realms of the landlady's bedroom, or the lower ones of the cellar, which, I have reason to believe, is the place usually chosen for the housing of the piano, and arranges his own according to his liking. It is as well that the move has to be made during the time we are down, as otherwise I don't know what mightn't ensue from the temporary block it must cause in the streets.

Holtmore's landlady is a funny little old lady. She keeps a slavey, but she shows him a mark of special favour by always waiting on him herself, always accompanied by a small dog, who, if one may judge from appearance of countenance, must be somehow connected with her, by the evolution theory, or whatever it is. She is scrupulously honest, so much so that not only does she not take his "remains," but keeps them till they become unpleasant to approach, but she even goes so far as to lock up his rooms to prevent other people getting into them whilst he is out—which certainly gives a feeling of security, but is inconvenient when he finds himself outside the door late at night at the top of a high set of stairs, and unable to get in to ring the bell for her to come up with the key.

And that reminds me that I have a word of advice to give to the intending under-graduate: if he is going into college, let him always sport his door when he goes out; if he is not, let him take care never to leave anything about that he

cares for. It is always a matter of wonder to me why more things are not lost than there are, considering how easy it is for any one to go into a man's rooms without any one seeing him, and if they do, to pretend he has been in on some business, or as a friend to leave a card. Holtmore himself can afford an instance of the wisdom of this remark.

In one of the lodgings he once was, he lost a waistcoat and a watch that he had left in the pocket. I remember the excitement it occasioned at the time. We went in a select body to the police-station, and ordered a detective, and then returned to Holtmore's rooms to "tea and criminal investigation." The detective came, much to the indignation of the landlady, who rather insinuated that she thought Holtmore must have abstracted the articles himself, and there, now that the deed was done, kept the door on the chain, and only admitted persons on the production of a certificate of respectability. The detective was a very sharp man; any one could see that. He first

desired to be shown the place where the watch had been last seen ; and, after examining it carefully declared his opinion,—

“ That the watch was certainly not there now.”

We acquiesced in this notion, and he then said,—

“ And you say that there was a waistcoat taken too ? ”

“ Yes,” said Holtmore.

“ Well,” said the detective after much deliberation, as if he was determined not to commit himself, “ one thing seems to be clear, that the person that took that watch is the person that took the waistcoat ! ”

And he made a note of it.

“ We believe,” the papers said at the time, “ that the police have a clue to the whereabouts of the thief.”

A clue is, I believe, a thread ; but if the only clue that exists is the connexion the detective found at the time I am speaking of, he must be a very slim policeman who can rest much weight upon it.

My private belief is that the thief took the next train, and was off to town with his booty before the theft was discovered, and we have heard the last of that watch and waistcoat.

This paper has been very, very rambling, I am afraid. It has rambled from Hayling's broken leg to Holtmore's detective. But if under the guise of frivolity I have succeeded in carrying any seeds of good advice—metaphor rather mixed, I'm afraid, but metaphors aren't my forte—then I shall rest happy with the result of my—(Bother this pen! that's the fourth time it's refused to write till I've refilled the reservoir)—labours.

THE END.





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